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## ARMOURY

KRYTAC LMG EXCLUSIVE  
LONE STAR SBR  
RWA NIGHTHAWK COVERT OPS

## EVENTS

WALK ON DEAD 3  
A SQUADRON TRAINING

## SITES

BUSH VALLEY  
IRONSIGHT  
THE PROVING GROUNDS



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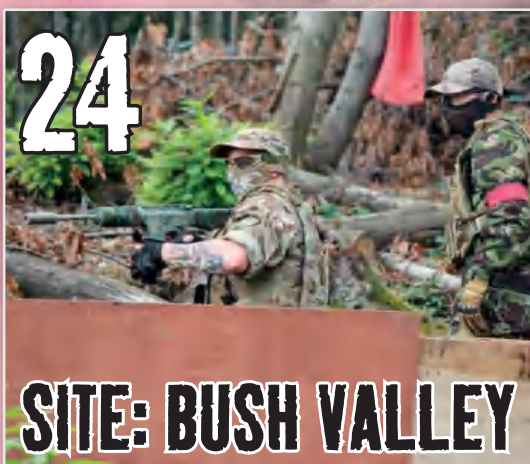




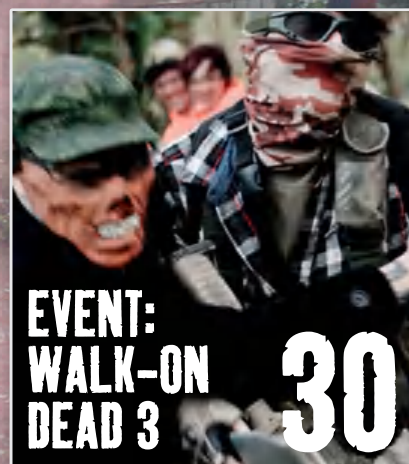
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Editor: **Nigel Streater**  
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Graphic design: **Havoc Design**  
Ad design: **Havoc Design**  
Publisher: **Nigel Streater**  
Cover Photo: **Les Lee**

UK 13-issue subscription rate: £46.50

UK 12-issue subscription rate: £43.00

UK 6-issue subscription rate: £24.00

For overseas prices email:  
subs@airsoft-action.co.uk



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©Calibre Publishing Limited 2015

Distribution: Distributed to the newstrade by  
Comag Magazine Marketing,  
West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE  
Tel: 01895 433 800

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# AIRSOFT NEWS

## AIRSOFT ACTION EXCLUSIVE

# 2015 CQB WORLD CUP SHOOTING COMPETITION

BY THE TIME THIS ISSUE hits the shelves, the 2015 CQB World Cup Shooting Competition, hosted by G&G Armament and co-organised with Taiwan Airsoft & Airgun Association and Chinese Culture University, will have concluded and the winners will be returning home with their trophies and accolades.

In the next issue of *Airsoft Action* we will have full, exclusive UK coverage of this International mega-event as Airsoft Action was the ONLY UK AIRSOFT MAGAZINE TO ATTEND the entire competition!

Thirteen Nations... Twenty Teams... Forty Contestants... battled it out over two hard-fought days of CQB competition in Taipei and *Airsoft Action's* very own "Roving Reporter", Les Lee, was there to capture all the highs and lows and Les will be bringing you the full story in the January 2016 issue, out on 17th December.

There seems to be a general "resistance" to "competitive airsoft" in the UK with "the opportunity for cheating" being the biggest stumbling block but maybe, just maybe, this is the way to do it...



## UAC has launched the following new products for November

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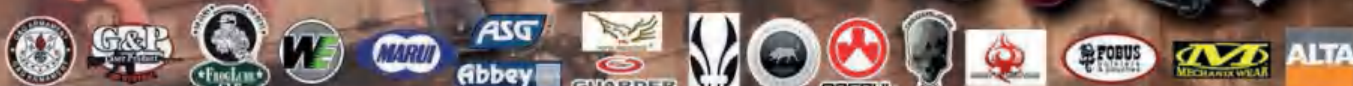
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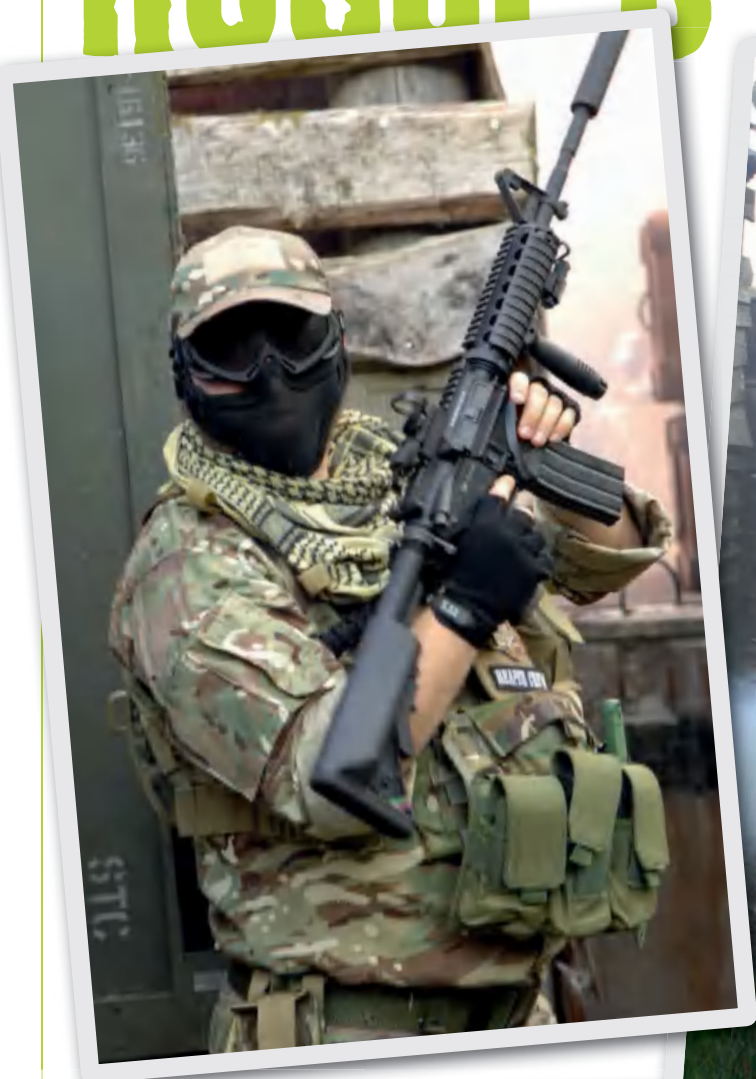


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# ROGUE'S GALLERY



This page: pictures from SIXFOURHUNDRED of a recent Pilgrims Bandit event at West Midlands



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From MURRAY





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## INFORMATION

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THE ADVENTURES OF MAG

CARTOON



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**AIRSOFT ACTION EXCLUSIVE:**

# KRYTAC LMG

**ONCE AGAIN, AIRSOFT ACTION BRINGS YOU A UK EXCLUSIVE REVIEW AS SCOTT ALLAN GETS HIS HANDS ON THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED LMG FROM KRAKEN TACTICAL**

THERE ARE MANY THINGS I love about writing for *Airsoft Action* and one of the greatest is the number of pre-release rifles we get to play with. In the last year *Airsoft Action* has seen many worldwide first reviews for Airsoft: G&G M1 Garand, the ASG Evo, the Halo Assault Rifle, Krytac CRB and now the Krytac Trident LMG. So welcome to the first UK review, exclusively for *Airsoft Action*.

When Krytac said they were going to raise the bar for Airsoft manufacturing, I raised a sceptical eyebrow. Am I a cynical and serial pessimist? Yes. Is that from years or promises in the Airsoft industry and huge let down after huge let down? Yes. So you will forgive me, Krytac, if I wasn't completely sold on your range of rifles at first. I half expected a nicely repacked Chinese/Taiwanese rebrand, however, the continual promise of "this is all new from the ground up" did make me wonder if they could be truly different and new?

## SO WHO (OR WHAT) IS KRYTAC?

Kraken Tactical, or Krytac, are a branch of Kriss Arms the US/ Swiss company who make the innovative real steel 45ACP Kriss Vector. Well these guys now have their very own Airsoft factory in Taiwan – and that means complete production control. You remember the Airsoft Kriss Vector I'm sure, it is still knocking around. It was built in collaboration between Kriss Arms and KWA. Kriss decided to buy KWA and then there was some kind of colossal fall out that involved dummy spitting and flaming unicorns – at least that is how it seemed. No firm details were ever released and very little has ever been heard publically, even in gossip. Kriss decided to avoid any future issues working with a manufacturer they would just become the manufacturer. Kriss headed to Taiwan to set up their very own plant to manufacture Airsoft products and Krytac was born. After a small-scale launch in the US they set up in the UK and the initial four models have been solid performers and popular with customers.

## THE REAL LMG

Whilst the LMG is partly fictional in terms of looks, it is based on the Ares Shrike design. Not Ares the Airsoft manufacturer but Ares the real steel firearms company. The 1960s were a glorious time for firearms, the great move onward and upward after the Second World War. Gone were the bolt action, single shot rifles and born were the magazine-fed, selectable-fire assault rifles. This is when the Stoner 63 was first developed, that was largely a precursor to the M16 rifle. The Shrike is not entirely dissimilar to the Stoner but it is based to run nearly identical to the M4 platform. It can be run in either a belt-fed, or magazine-fed format and is around half the empty weight of a M249. So more bullet firing ability in a compact package is always going to seem like a good idea - as long as you can deal with fouling and heat build-up from firing a large number of rounds, that is.







**“STARTING FROM TOP TO TAIL IT IS A STUNNING FLAT BLACK THAT UTTERLY REEKS OF QUALITY. THE BARREL IS SHORTER THAN THE ORIGINAL LMG DESIGN, WITH A 12” LENGTH IT SCREAMS ALL THE FLEXIBILITY THAT A PLAYER COULD HOPE FOR, BOTH INDOOR AND OUTDOOR.”**

## ENTER THE TRIDENT LIGHT MACHINE GUN

Externally this rifle is hard to beat, as you would expect from a quality manufacturer. Starting from top to tail it is a stunning flat black that utterly reeks of quality. The barrel is shorter than the original LMG design, with a 12" length it screams all the flexibility that a player could hope for, both indoor and outdoor. The full metal free-floating Keymod front end is quite possibly the most unique-looking AEG based on a M4 platform. The disappointingly plastic flash hider is removable and exposes a 14mm CCW thread, that are the most common type for replacement flash hiders and/or suppressors. The receiver is an aluminium alloy stamped with the Krytac logo (Hail Hydra) and the finish is a unique matt black that looks unlike any other finish on the market. The fire selector is ambidextrous and slightly shorter on the right side, to avoid it catching on your hands or gloves. The superb stock is a six-position adjustable and will accept either nunchuck-style batteries or stock tube LiPo batteries. There are also QD points located on the stock, as well as a sling plate being fitted to the back to receiver. While the previous Krytac rifles were near flawless, I did have a couple of tiny niggles with the LMG. Don't get me wrong these are things I wouldn't normally pick a company up for but Krytac (for me) are one of the new big boys and their rifles should be as flawless as possible.

The top feed cover does have a little bit of play in it, not a great deal but it is there, if you have an optic fitted you may notice the play even more and, as previously, I found the pistol grip quite bland and out of date. There are much better designs out there and I believe Krytac will be releasing their own updated version in future. Another oddity is the lack of iron sights with the package and the lack of alignment between the rear rail and the front rail above the barrel. The use for the front barrel rail isn't even all that apparent, maybe an X300 style flash light?



The externals of the Krytac LMG do not leave much to be desired in the looks department. The package to value ratio is quite good even though I don't like box magazines very much. Then when you start to look at the internals, getting into the guts can really make or break a rifle. The Krytac system is really second to none with their very own gearbox, named the "Nautilus V2" and is their very own redesign of the Marui V2. That is a cool name and in keeping with the Kraken/marine theme, although the word from the original Latin means Sailor – perhaps they meant Captain Nemo's ship maybe? The gearbox is the heart of a rifle and the Krytac Nautilus is now a tried and tested, reliable gearbox.

The Nautilus V2 is a reinforced 8mm ball bearing gearbox that boasts an integrated MOSFET inside the case to regulate power and to protect the trigger contacts. The corners of the gearbox that surround the cylinder feature a smooth radius, as opposed to a 90° angle, to prevent fracture of the casing. There are many clever things, such as the gearbox shell, which features a small window on the left side where lubrication can be applied directly to the gears or piston and this window is also





convenient for inspecting the angle of engagement with the gearbox fully assembled. Additional gearbox features include a quick-change spring guide system, which will allow the spring to be changed without completely disassembling the gearbox. Again this isn't anything very new but it is helpful for long-term usage of the system.

The KRYTAC piston is made of a durable, lightweight polymer and features 4 metal teeth, with the 2nd to last tooth absent. The Cylinder head is padded with a rubber bumper to optimize the angle of engagement and to absorb energy from the impact of the piston assembly. The material for the gears have been especially formulated to be very strong, it is reported by Krytac that the Rockwell test figures on the gears are much higher than industry norms (unfortunately there were no actual stats given). The spur gear features a tension system built into its axis to keep the gear perfectly aligned while under load. Other features of the Nautilus gearbox include an anti-corrosive coating that gives the gearbox its unique colouring. Each component on the KRYTAC Nautilus V2 Gearbox has been designed to perform at a high level and to be user friendly for the technician that repeatedly tunes their AEG.

The KRYTAC rotary hop up unit is constructed of polymer and features many user friendly updates to the regular M4 hop up systems we see every day. The rotary adjustment wheel is precise and definitive, each click position is numbered and the hop up offers a tactile and audible feedback when adjusting. It looks a little like the G36/Madbull style that is a superior and easier design to work with. The lever arm can be lifted upwards to give access to the hop up nub chamber for easy adjusting or cleaning.

## ON THE GAME SITE

Luckily I got the chance to run this out with a few players at Catterick Garrison for a Stirling Airsoft event. A two day event running as part of a team is a great way to test out something new like this and means if there are any drawbacks, I will definitely find them.

Coming with a box magazine holding 3,500 rounds I padded around the game site picking targets and easily hit out to 45-50 metres with controlled bursts. The end of the inner barrel is braced by an O-ring, this reduces vibration and barrel wobble during operation which in turn increases the accuracy. Systema did this by making the brass barrel very thick and Krytac have made this in the same way that H&K increased the accuracy of the real steel MK23 SOCOM pistol. The high quality metal construction was noticeable as the hours wore on and the weight took its toll a little.

The box magazine kept chugging away although (irritatingly) the wind button was on the bottom of the magazine so I sometimes had to have the box mag resting on my left hand so I could keep it feeding. There is a reported revision for the box magazine in the future but it won't be for the initial launch in the UK. For me the box magazine was a bit of a pain throughout the game, personally I have never liked electric magazines as it is something else to go wrong and they rarely

## FEATURES

**POWER: 350FPS WITH BLASTER 0.20G**

**RATE OF FIRE: 20 ROUNDS PER SECOND ON 11.1V LIPO**

**OUTER BARREL 12"**

**INNER BARREL DIAMETER 6.05MM**

**LENGTH 750 – 840MM**

**WEIGHT 3.2KG**

**FULL METAL ALUMINIUM ALLOY CONSTRUCTION**

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keep up with sustained fire. That said it didn't do too badly, it just didn't feel as good as the rest of the rifle for me. I would be tempted to swap it out for either high capacity magazines (if you weren't overly fussy about being super "MilSim"), or even just on mid capacity magazines if you wanted to be more realistic. I must say when I played around adding different parts I was amazed how good it looked as a chunky M4 sporting regular magazines. Having the single shot/full auto makes it an amazing all round rifle for games where you move indoors and need to restrict your fire.

## CONCLUSION

All good things come to those who wait and the Krytac Trident LMG is definitely a unique piece to have waited for. Okay the Hurricane kit years ago was similar and yes, the Krytac version shares some similarities but the Krytac is both cheaper and much better looking!

The price is just about where it should be although I had secretly hoped it would be slightly less.

Functionality is key for any modern Airsoft rifle, as are looks and this package has them both in large quantities. It is pretty heavy especially after a long day's gaming but it is a LMG so that is to be expected, although it might be worth thinking about that if you are on the small side. Some people would rather not have a MOSFET installed with the gearbox and I can see their point in some ways, yet the Krytac seems to be very reliable. The lack of any sights is probably my only other issue. Personally I don't like optics a great deal yet you don't really have any choice but to use one on the LMG, which isn't included.

In short, if you think you like the look of this rifle you will be blown away with it in the flesh, just be ready to have tired arms, the occasional niggle with the box mag, use an optic and, most importantly, spend a lot on BBs as you suppress everything on your game site!





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# **LONE STAR EVOLUTION**

THE LONE STAR TACTICAL (LST) Ranger Short Barreled Rifle (SBR) from Evolution Airsoft is not a new model to the market but up until now it's been one that has been very hard to get hold of.

Part of Evolution Airsoft's offering consists of some very, very high quality replicas of Lone Star Tactical (LST) carbine models. The Evolution Airsoft "Hardcore Series" LSTs are the official airsoft replicas of the real Lone Star tactical rifles, produced under a worldwide exclusive license granted to Evolution International S.r.l. by Lone Star Tactical Supply in the USA and

these airsoft replicas are made in Hong-Kong under very close scrutiny!

The Lone Star replicas are top quality items, meeting MIL Std 105E – ISO 2859-1:1999 quality control standards, which sounds spot-on but let's get the basics out of the way first...

Licensed trademarks and design, with a unique serial number? Check!

Anodized aluminium body and CNC machined one piece barrel? Yup!

High torque motor, steel gears in a sturdy V2 gearbox,

**"SO, WHAT WE HAVE IN ESSENCE IS A SOLIDLY BUILT CARBINE WITH SOME WORKMANLIKE  
INTERNALS AND SOME EYE-CATCHING EXTERNALS BUT HOW DOES THIS ALL COME TOGETHER IN  
RELATION TO YOUR WEEKEND SKIRMISH? IN A NUTSHELL, EXCELLENTLY!"**





reinforced piston, 7mm radial bearings and metal Hop Up? Again, all present a correct!

All in all internally a pretty tight package; agreed nothing here is going to set the airsoft world alight but it's all functional and hard wearing, just what you want from a gun that's going to be used week in, week out. What none of this addresses though is what you really get for your money, as there's a lot going on here if you look closely.

One of the pre-requisites in the licencing agreement between Lone Star Tactical in the USA, who make top notch real firearms for competition level use and Evolution, was that any replica bearing the Lone Star logo should be constructed to the very highest level of quality in their build. Hefting the Ranger SBR you are immediately aware that you're holding onto something that is built to last!

The upper and lower receivers, finished in a nice dark grey as per the real firearm, are extremely solid with no movement

or gaps discernible between them. All of the other parts are finished to uniform matt black (a version with FDE furniture is also available), which gives the carbine a visually stunning look. All logos and trades are very well achieved. The external parts are where things really start to get interesting though. First up let's take a look at the rail system, because what you get here is pretty surprising!

Essentially the front rail system is a replica of the CASV-EL system from VLTOR; there are no trademarks on this but the setup is unmistakable! The CASV system is a freefloat drop in accessory and the smooth main body allows mounting points to be easily setup in multiple configurations. As with the real deal, the replica comes with a set of rail sections which can be simply screwed onto the main body just as you like.

At the back end of the carbine it's a similar story as there's a very nice take on the VLTOR ModStock as well. Again this is unbranded but it's definitely a copy of the AIB-MCB IMod, with





a QD sling swivel included. This comes with two sets of cheek pieces which are easily changed out to give you a personal fit. There is next to no movement between the stock and the buffer tube, which offers six positions, so once again it's easy to personalise.

The last components which make the Ranger SBR look a little different are the pistol grip, a replica of the ergonomic Tango Down Battle Grip, a Tango Down-style foregrip and, on the sharp end, a replica of the Noveske KFH Sound Amplifier. Starting to add all of these bespoke external parts up, the Ranger SBR really does appear to give great value, as a real CASV-EL alone will cost you US\$239.95 before you even think about shipping and the dreaded import duty!

So, what we have in essence is a solidly built carbine with some workmanlike internals and some eye-catching externals but how does this all come together in relation to your weekend skirmish? In a nutshell, excellently!

The Ranger SBR comes with a 300 round metal HiCap magazine which worked very well out of the box. I tried various other magazines and all of them functioned perfectly, so if you like your Mid or Real-caps you'll have no issues with this AEG. Fitting a 7.4 volt LiPo battery is simplicity itself as the bottom section of the rail system hinges downwards by pinching together a pair of pressure plates at the front; this means that changing batteries during a game is easily achieved with no tools required.

With the stock set at position five the carbine works well for me even when wearing a plate carrier, shouldering easily. The metal rear sight and "A" Post at the front were easily acquired. The Hop Up is easy to access; pulling back the charging handle moves the "bolt cover" to the rear and the hop wheel is

exposed and once set, palming the bolt release sends the cover forward again.

Testing with .20g BBs resulted in a respectable and site-friendly average of 324fps through the chrono, which means this AEG is usable straight out of the box. Nothing over 331fps was experienced but obviously you should chrono your individual model before use. Once the hop is set this little carbine was ranging accurately out to a good 40+m, so in my opinion it will be great for CQB where engagement distances are lower, though still eminently usable in a woodland setting. I fitted a "T1" style sight to the top rail which, again in my opinion, is the perfect "close in" optic and a Klarus XT11

taclite in an Element mount. All accessories slotted on perfectly to the supplied rail sections. The only change I made to the carbine was a personal one, in that I fitted a singlepoint sling plate; this was easily done in about ten minutes by simply releasing the buffer tube and replacing the stock plate.

Now I've had my own SBR for some considerable time now and over the course of many a day's gaming I've experienced no issues with the Ranger whatsoever; at no point has it stuttered or misfed, each and every BB leaving the barrel with a satisfying "crack", courtesy of the sound amplifier. If you don't fancy this then the outer barrel is threaded 14mm CCW which means that any suppressor or flash hider could be easily substituted. The trigger is crisp with minimal takeup, so getting off swift semi-auto shots is easy, again perfect for CQB work.

**"OVER THE COURSE OF MANY A DAY'S GAMING I'VE EXPERIENCED NO ISSUES WITH THE RANGER WHATSOEVER; AT NO POINT HAS IT STUTTERED OR MISFED, EACH AND EVERY BB LEAVING THE BARREL WITH A SATISFYING "CRACK", COURTESY OF THE SOUND AMPLIFIER."**

All in all, my time with the Lone Star Ranger SBR thus far has been a very positive experience; I've a number of SBRs which are pretty heavily upgraded and the Ranger SBR gives them a run for their money as a stock gun, so I can't really say anything negative about this super little AEG.

I will say well done to Evolution Airsoft though, as the growing reputation they have for building quality airsoft replicas is certainly very well deserved.

Expect to pay in the region of £260.00 for the Ranger SBR and for more information on this model and others in the Evolution Airsoft Lone Star Range, head over to [www.speq-se.com](http://www.speq-se.com)





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ITS PEDIGREE SUGGESTS**

# RWA NIGHTHAWK COVERT OPS

EVERYTHING CHANGES IN LIFE, sometimes they get much better and other times they get far worse. So when I heard about the brand new Nighthawk Covert Ops I was naturally excited.

The 1911, I often joke, is the pistol they forgot to stop making, it's over one hundred years young these days and it still looks great. It has been reincarnated more times than the Star Trek franchise and this time it's the turn of Nighthawk, produced under licence by Red Wolf and manufactured OEM by KWC. This is also one of the pistols endorsed by ex-Magpul guru, Chris Costa and if that isn't enough reason to buy one already, just wait until you read on.

1911 pistols have one problem in Airsoft; as a general rule they suck a lot in the cold weather and as you have probably noticed, we're now in the cold season big time. There are two

ways around this for me normally: Option 1, I just don't use a pistol in winter or Option 2 (my favourite), buy a Walther P99 or Socom MK23 non-blow back. Players do seem to get humpy when a pistol is non-blow back yet have no issue with their rifle most often not having any – an odd observation. Players do really want a backup side arm but what is the point if the last line of defence is going to fail you?

## THE REAL STEEL VERSION

Nighthawk never say "that's good enough!" In September 2012, they started using nothing but parts they developed that are fully machined from solid billet. This includes very difficult parts to machine, such as the beavertail grip safety, thumb safety, magazine release, sliding stop, hammers etc. They have also switched to an extreme high cut under the trigger



guard and this is very noticeable when you pick up the gun.

Even customers with large fingers may suddenly find that even an Officer-sized frame will allow them to get all three fingers on the frame. All parts are produced in Berryville Arkansas, USA from solid forgings.

So it boils down to them being very serious about their 45 ACP-slinging 1911 and although the 45 round is far from new, it is still very popular. It's like firing a large brick at your target and this is why to this day it is

equally loved by civilians and law enforcement alike – even the US military still revere this pistol and the calibre.

So "old" definitely doesn't always mean "out of date"!

### THE AIRSOFT VERSION

The finish of the metal work is nice... very nice! The balance and weight feel very good and accurate and the finish of the paintwork, much like the previous Nighthawk, is even, flat and nicely executed. The grips are gator style Nighthawk types with the same styling screws too and these compliment the Nighthawk markings on the top slide perfectly. Additionally for this version, there is now a mock silencer but given that all the noise on an Airsoft version generally comes from the moving parts, the silencer is mostly just for looks. The trigger action is nice and smooth as you would expect from any pistol but that aside, it is not until the blowback cycle starts that the real fun begins!

CO2-powered pistols have always provided a great blow back action but the rather large downside is the fact that they are often putting out a higher feet per second velocity than your standard AEG! You could always generally expect a CO2 pistol to chronograph over 400 fps with a 0.20 BB and, in lots of cases, this would be even as high as 450fps. This is why, to date, you have not seen so many CO2 Airsoft pistols actually being used in the UK, however, the Nighthawk Covert Ops is



designed with playing Airsoft in mind at a less face-shattering 350fps with a Blaster 0.20g BB.

What this means for you, is that you have a pistol that is less effected by the cold and damp (also known as British summertime), that is fundamentally site-friendly and has a colossal level of recoil! Oh and the noise, don't forget the excellent "crack" from the slide as it punches the rounds out!

So this is everything you will ever need from a pistol, it looks great, works all year around and you can fit whatever you need to the 20mm rail. Is there a catch? Well, there is always a slight catch...

The magazines need a CO2 bulb that is a bit of a pain to change. You certainly won't do it in a hurry under pressure but then each mag will probably provide you with two full loads before it needs changing and let's face it, if you are reloading

**"WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU, IS THAT YOU HAVE A PISTOL THAT IS LESS EFFECTED BY THE COLD AND DAMP (ALSO KNOWN AS BRITISH SUMMERTIME), THAT IS FUNDAMENTALLY SITE-FRIENDLY AND HAS A COLOSSAL LEVEL OF RECOIL!"**







**“EACH MAG WILL PROBABLY PROVIDE YOU WITH TWO FULL LOADS BEFORE IT NEEDS CHANGING AND LET’S FACE IT, IF YOU ARE RELOADING A PISTOL IN THE FIELD YOU ARE IN SOME PRETTY SERIOUS POO!”**

a pistol in the field you are in some pretty serious poo! The magazines are pretty reasonable priced and are generally found for less than £30. Okay it’s not crazy cheap but would you rather spend an extra few pounds on a magazine you can use all year around, or one that you can only use on a warm day?

Almost every 1911 I have ever used really did toil in the cold weather. Part of the issue with the GBB types is the thin single stack magazine that just doesn’t hold enough gas. As the body and magazine cools, the compression falls from the gas expansion and this gives you sluggish and poor performance. CO2 does work better but you have the additional cost of bulbs, anywhere from 30-50p per bulb. It makes the running cost higher than a standard gas blow back pistol undoubtedly. Holster-wise the Nighthawk Covert Ops will easily fit the real steel common holsters such as the SERPA - and that is good



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news - but if you want a pistol torch fitted, you will probably need to get a custom Kydex holster made.

The range on the Nighthawk is not to be sniffed at either! I found that running Blaster 0.30s gave the best range but also upped the power slightly so you will have to be careful you don’t slip over your site limits. Also worth noting that the first 2 or 3 shots tend to be more powerful with a CO2 pistol, so always good to fire off a few shots dry before using it in-game with a fresh bulb.

There isn’t much you can really do with a pistol in terms of changing it up but I think if you had one of these, add a nice LED flashlight like the newer NUPROL types (which are great value) and a custom Kydex holster and you would be a happy man for a long time.

## CONCLUSION

So a pistol is something everyone loves and wants but so few of us ever get around to using. The sad fact is they are a little bit extra hassle and therefore not used as often. Yes this works better in the cold weather, much better than a standard GBB but you do have to take into consideration the 12g bulbs you will have to buy and keep a stock of until the “wonder reusable bulb” appears. Loading them into the magazines is an extra faff around but worth it but if I am honest, I often forget to even gas the magazines on my pistol. The silencer looks nice but is ultimately useless so personally I would probably leave it off most of the time.

But if you can be bothered doing a little personal admin first thing on a game day, the Nighthawk Covert Ops will serve you well for those close encounters when all you have left is your pistol, a grin on your face and the enemy are just around the corner....

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# BUSH-CRAFT

**AIRSOFT ACTION'S VERY OWN "KATE ADIE" HEADS INTO THE KENT COUNTRYSIDE TO  
REPORT FROM A SITE WHERE "PASSION" IS NOT A DIRTY WORD**

DEEP INSIDE A LUSH FOREST of tall evergreens in the heart of Kent lies a deeply carved ravine, home of the lesser spotted Sniper, the not-quite-so-rare Marksman or the more frequently spotted Operative chasing an elusive objective or three.

Bush Valley Airsoft, a UKARA registered site, is based in Runham Woods, Lenham, near Maidstone in Kent. It was created (quite literally) from the valley floor up in June 2015, by Vic Slann and Tim Brown and is run by a committee of its founding members, thus ensuring everything and anything gets covered - and covered well - from building fortresses to flipping burgers.

Whilst we're talking about what makes a good site great, it is not just about how many members come along to each game, nor who's sporting the latest state-of-the-art firepower or tactical bolt on accessory but a number one commodity (which can be a make or break ingredient). Yes, I'm talking about "passion".

I've been there and done it myself, when I founded, chaired, managed and coached an American Football team back in the days of big hair and moustaches (and the guys were much the same)! Yes, the disco dancing eighties, where for six years my

passion for the sport and my club took precedence over life itself. Why am I telling you this? Well, it is because I wholly recognise it, even though it is an invisible characteristic behind every successful Airsoft club.

Without passion, things simply wouldn't happen. Money is nice but running an Airsoft club isn't going to make much of that because a passionate club owner will enthusiastically reinvest any profit into further developing a site, which is what I saw at Bush Valley. These guys are constantly injecting funds into site development and in the five months since they opened, they have done so well with the funding and the site (being predominantly forestry land, they recycle wood that is cut or fallen to create their ever-expanding battle ground), they have now divided it into interconnecting zones to run tactically linked games if they so choose.

Anyway, once again, the excitement of reviewing a relatively new and dynamic club has made me digress from my typical commentary, where I like to start at the beginning (a very novel idea) which takes me to location and access. A satnav would be a useful piece of kit, although not essential as the website gives easy to follow directions and when you arrive at the hard







top car park, you lug your gear no more than ten yards into the covered and well-furnished safe zone to set up your base camp. One feature that “warmed” me (pun intended) was that smack bang in the middle of the encampment was a huge log bonfire, which created the warmest atmosphere that I have ever felt. Bring along marshmallows and crumpets if you want, in fact I would recommend it as it all adds to the warmth of the atmosphere and the welcome that you will receive from the staff. There is also a food van on site, commonly referred to by the players as the “Bush Tukka” van, which is operated by Debs Banks and Leah Taylor and where you’re sure to get a tasty burger or bacon roll plus hot and cold drinks as well as snacks to fuel you through the day. If you fancy making a longer stay, or you’re worried about getting up late on Airsoft day, then you also have the opportunity to camp on site the night before, so that you can quite literally pop down and make a weekend of it. Just let the guys know in advance and don’t worry about getting chilly because the blazing log fire will keep you warm throughout the night. What a great idea, nice one guys!

There is a small but perfectly formed on-site shop run by Steve Pearson where you can buy any essentials and of course,

**“THE SITE IS SET ACROSS 60 ACRES, PART VALLEY AND PART WOODLAND WHICH OFFERS ONE OF THE BEST VALLEYS IN THE SOUTH EAST, WITH SHRUBS AND TREES AND OF COURSE, THE DEEP VALLEY TO RUN UP BOTH SIDES – IT’S A SNIPERS PARADISE!”**

new toys should finances (and the missus) allow, plus minor gun-smithery is available if needed. The 50 metre chrono/shooting range is very good, with a varied selection of targets at different distances and the toilets... Ah yes, the toilets! These are the cleanest pair of Portaloos that I have ever seen at any site. Think “Portaloos” and I think I would rather go and join the bears in the woods, bog roll in hand, as they are not normally the most user-friendly of places! But these twin towers of cleanliness, sterility and happy fragrances make you fearless when it comes to a re-visit. Something to consider if you decide on a sleep over, knowing that you can cr\*p in quiet comfort, free from bog bugs and nature’s nasties.

So let’s take a look at the peeps behind the scene, they’re certainly a bunch of crazy people and they just want the best for the site.

Tim Brown: Head Marshal/Owner

Vic Slann: Marshal/Owner

John Smith: Volunteer Marshal

Arthur Ford: Volunteer Marshal

Darwin Hamilton: Photographer/Marshal

Steve Pearson: Tec Guy/Shop Owner

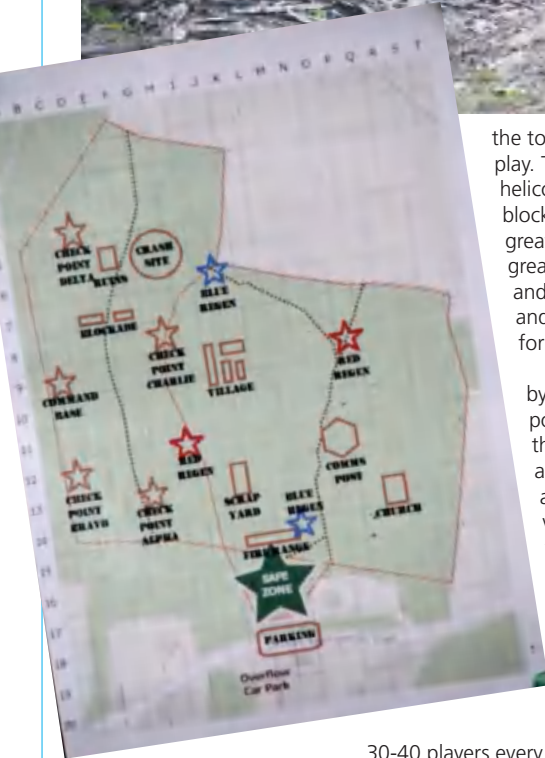
Michael Jones: Shop Helper

Deb Banks and Leah Taylor: Bush Tukka Owners

The site is set across 60 acres, part valley and part woodland which offers one of the best valleys in the South East, with shrubs and trees and of course, the deep valley to run up both sides – it’s a snipers paradise! There’s a path running from one end of the valley to the other with a massive round opening at







the top end; this allows open air game play. There is also a downed makeshift helicopter and a ruins area with a blockade on the main path allowing great extraction games. The valley is a great place with multiple check points and bases in addition to the chopper and ruins, making it a versatile area for many different game types.

Then there is the woodland area by the safe zone, offering 4 check points, the village, the scrapyard, the church, the comms post and ample room to build more. It sets a very different atmosphere to the valley as it creates a dark enticing woodland, where some games become close quarter battles, making it an amazing fire fight for all and with the evenings drawing in, tracers, lasers and flashlights may be well deployed.

The site runs (on average) 30-40 players every game day, with young gunners from the age of 11 right through to veterans. Vic and Tim encourage everyone to play as they are a family run site and

want to be known for this, allowing families to have a good time. They also hold special event and corporate days (which generally sell out) and having 60 Airsofters on site taking up the challenges set for the day is more than enough at this current stage of development, however, instinct tells me that after seeing the potential that Bush Valley has, this is likely to increase over time.

They also run "Sniper Ops" games (no surprise there) alongside the skirmish games. Bush Valley Airsoft wants to be known for trying anything once and it's all driven by player's feedback and comments. By listening to this feedback, it's the best (in fact the only) way that the site will move forward and evolve. Clearly, decisions are made and enacted from a balance of constructive ideas generated from the people that matter... the players!

They are also engaging in team games with a trophy this year and subsequent years, although (and this is just my personal thought - well guys, you do like feedback) perhaps tournament games should cover a shorter period, say four to six months as a lot can happen in a year with teams changing and it would also help to maintain momentum and enthusiasm. However, I think that it is a splendid idea for so many reasons. Also with our ever-changing British weather, perhaps designated months may be more attractive such as during the summer. Just a thought..?

The winning team name will be etched on a shield which will be on display for the year.

Any number of games can be played at Bush Valley Airsoft but the most popular ones are: Domination in the valley, Escort, Extraction, Capture the Flag, Team Rush, plus Search and Destroy. They will also be introducing The Objective Box to enhance game play by creating a more realistic approach to certain games. The countdown timer to plant the bomb will certainly add apprehension, tension and is designed to inject some panic into that game too.

When I had a chance, I asked Tim what single most feature is most important at Bush Valley Airsoft, and without hesitation, Tim emphasised: "THE single most important point is that we would like to thank all our players. Without them we are nothing, they are what makes the site. The way they are when at the site is great. They show respect, they have fun, they welcome new players and of course have friendly







banter. This makes the day more exciting and long may it keep going" ... and THIS is where I saw that invisible component which is the make or break deal for any Airsoft site - and that is passion! When I saw the twinkle of determination in Tim's eye, it told me more than words can ever say. It also told me that Bush Valley are here and they're here to stay.

They have already achieved their aim, which is to make it a family orientated site where all players respect each other. BVA have also created and promote their own slogan, which is "H.I.T." and stands for Honesty, Integrity and Trust - which is something every airsofter should hold dear!

During my visit I enjoyed a few hours of game play, to enable me to get a "feel" for the site from the ground up. Anyone can write about what they see but in my opinion, it is what you *feel* that tells a bigger story. Whether you are a casualty through a thousand rounds heading your way in a blanket kill or a single, well-placed hit from a sniper trained on you, it makes me feel that I have been "killed" in a more tactical and worthy way. I earned that shot through being a threat... I deserved that hit by not being as stealthy as I should have been... and that is more satisfying than a rain of BBs from

a box mag. I'm all for support gunners but when people just keep their finger on the trigger, just because they can, it takes me back to my Paintball days and a place I chose to leave for a more advanced sport/hobby/pastime.

Great bogs, yummy grub, the warmest of welcomes and the perfect mix of Snipers and crazy characters has given me a good, lasting impression of a young, fresh site that has something for everyone and everyone is an equal in every way.

If anyone fancies going along to the site, then check out their impressive website [www.bushvalleyairsoft.co.uk](http://www.bushvalleyairsoft.co.uk), where you can keep up to date with what's going on. You can get a good look at the game site by browsing through the galleries and videos and you'll find all the information on their rental packages too. Not only that, you can also book your place online and once you've browsed the website, why not pop over to their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/477736639068018/> and say "Hi!"

They also have a You Tube channel showing their game days, which you will find at: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQVhT\\_Rw9xuNohDswTd-xOw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQVhT_Rw9xuNohDswTd-xOw)

Finally, I can't conclude this review without mentioning that if you don't drive, don't panic! One of the guys will pick you up from Lenham train station, just drop them a message and they'll sort it out for you. It's no problem as it's all a part of their super, friendly and very accommodating service.

And if the guys really want some constructive feedback, I would say with hand on heart "stock and sell marshmallows" as to have such an amazing open bonfire as a centrepiece without using it to its full potential and cook, seems such a waste! What I'm really saying is, is that this is my excuse to come back for a game at this awesome and quite unique-by-design Airsoft site and check if you do in fact follow up on feedback, as I will be expecting marshmallows with my burger! Les OUT!

## CONTACT DETAILS:

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07786 448698

[www.bushvalleyairsoft.co.uk](http://www.bushvalleyairsoft.co.uk)  
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LR4-RIS 10	£209.00	LCT LR4-RIS 10" AEG Airsoft Gun.
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TX-BABY	£199.00	LCT TX-BABY AEG Airsoft Gun.
TX-M	£215.00	LCT TX-M AEG Airsoft Gun.
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# WALK-ON DEAD 3

HOSTED BY SKIRMISH EXETER

IN EARLY NOVEMBER 2015, in the third year since the outbreak, a discovery was made in the hills to the north of the city. This expansive woodland area had recently been the scene of bitter fighting between two non-infected groups for reasons previously unknown. Found amongst the remains and battle debris was a rucksack containing a notebook, camera and tape recorder. All of these items had suffered water and impact damage. What follows is a fragmented reconstruction of the information that was salvaged. A chronological order has been attempted in order to assist archival referencing...

## PAGE 3:

I have barely had chance to say a proper hello to everyone in the group before we get the call to move on again. Some are friendly, others not so much. We are all hungry and tired but that is nothing new or unexpected. It's strange to feel safer after so much time alone. I tell myself that the guns they carry can protect me but the violence these people are capable of unnerves me. I have a thousand questions to ask but so far I've yet to have any real answers. I can reason their reluctance to talk is because I am new to them, not a threat per se but something to be figured out. The journalist in me can't stop talking though. If I am to break through to them I must do so through Rick. He's more than a leader. He's a guardian, a father who must give his permission. If I can get him to talk then surely the others will prove to be more loquacious.

## PAGE 14:

I thought that I had seen the worst before but nothing on earth could have prepared me for the sight of so much blood. The Walkers didn't just stumble over to us; they appeared in amongst us before we had time to react. I don't understand how it happened so fast, those who were bit turned before we had a chance to stop it and we were soon on our back foot and running.

Those who fled first, the ones that led our frantic retreat from the dead, were the first to fall to the enemy ambush that lay hidden in the shadows. That first volley of rounds decimated us. I have no way to recall how things progressed from that point. It was a dance of chaos and carnage that my brain is refusing to bring order to. How any of us survived is beyond my reckoning.





## PAGE 19:

Rick has agreed to talk to me. We found food and a place to rest and with everyone's spirits lifted I took a chance and asked him. He gave me a look before answering, made me feel like a kid who's mom just realised she needs to sit down and give her baby 'The Talk'.



## TAPE RECORDING:

- 'You understand why I'm doing this, don't you? Why I'm making a record of what's happening? For others to look at someday and learn about us, what we did right and what we did wrong. When I first met you, when you saved me, you asked me three questions. Let me ask you them now. How many walkers have you killed?'

- 'So many I've lost count. I'd have to say at least 30 today'

- 'How many people have you killed?'

- 'Two. The Governor and one other... a friend'

- 'Why?'

- 'You'd be stupid to think we're all gonna survive, we won't, that's the way the world works now, you've got to fight for each day'

- 'That's not an answer Rick. Why did you kill those men? Why did you kill your friend?'

- 'The governor was a threat to us, he was never going to stop, he'd always be there ready to take it all from us, the little we have, it was him or us. As for my friend? When we got to Terminus we thought we were finally safe. They welcomed us in and then they ambushed us, in all the confusion he got left behind. I couldn't let them take him; it was apparent what they were and what they would do. I couldn't save him, but I couldn't let him die that way neither.'

- 'The others have told me about the

governor, what you did to protect your people. They have a lot of respect for you. But...'

- 'But what?'

- 'They're afraid of you, Rick.'

- 'They need to learn, just like you do, we take no chances, we protect our own, us over them. Those who've been with me from the beginning know how it is, they understand and because they accept it they're still here.'

- 'Okay. Okay. You care for your people, your family. I respect that, Rick, really I do. I've taken a wrong path here and upset you. I understand. I apologise. Let's talk about now. You've lost friends today. These battles I've witnessed, the people who have been attacking us at every turn. Who are they?'

- 'They're the real enemy, not the Walkers. We came to Terminus on the promise of sanctuary and what we found was a nightmare, they butchered our people and hunted us. These "Terminants", they won't give up so we're gonna have to kill them. All of them.'

- 'And there's no way to reason with them?'

- 'Do you hear that? That gunfire? Does that sound like they want to talk?'

- 'Earlier, down the road a ways, we were holding them off when they took cover inside an old school bus... Do you recall?'

- 'Of course, that thing was a wreck. It







looked like it was someone's camp once, before they were bit and turned. We cleared out the Walkers and used it to boost our defensive position. But it was a weak spot and we had to fall back when the Terminants attacked in force. Some of the survivors held the line whilst others tried to get in behind them, we were partly successful.'

- 'That's a very interesting look at it Rick. Can I tell you how I saw it from where I was? These 'Terminant' people, they took cover in the bus as your group blasted away at them. Then a group of Walkers appeared out of the tree line and rushed onboard the bus... You held your fire then, but only then. Your whole group held their fire and you all just watched. The screams, the cries for help and the bodies being eaten alive... you all just watched. Is that what it takes to be a survivor?'

- 'We did what we had to, these walkers don't care which side you're on, we're all just food, sometimes they seem to work with us sometimes against us, it freed us up to focus on the Terminant's weak side, there was nothing we could do for them, for anyone... Even if I did feel so inclined.'

- 'It's a cold way to be, Rick. How are you going to live with it when it's all over? You're a good man beneath that ain't hard to see, but the curse of the good man is he gets to live a long life with the wrong he's done. You're a cop, you must've seen it before, you know I'm right.'

- 'You came along after the worst of it passed. The Governor, the Terminants, the damn Walkers! We are fighting for our right to live. How many have we lost? How many have they lost? It doesn't come down to that in the end. It's about keeping the ones you love alive, about doing what it takes for them. I'm not only looking after myself, I'm looking after everyone here. Now hold out your hand and take this.'

- 'A gun?'

- 'You ain't gonna kill anything with that pencil and paper.'

- 'Is this you looking out for me too?'

- 'Yeah well, as long as you don't screw up you'll stay alive; if you stay with us we've got your back.'

- 'I...'

- 'When it comes down to it, when you're surrounded like we were at 'Jim Bobs' pit stop and trying to keep the generator running to keep the fences up, every last shot counts no matter who it comes from.'

- 'That was when I was most scared, I ain't afraid to admit that. When the ammo ran dry and everyone fought hand to hand. Clubs and knives and machetes and axes. Such madness I couldn't tell Walker from Human. All I could do was watch the whole thing through my camera lens, trying to pretend it weren't real. Some guy nearly took my damn head off... 'til you stopped him.'

- 'It just shows you how savage it all is, it shows you what we have to do and how low this fight can get but we fought them back, all of them, Terminant and Walker.'

- 'I owe you, for my life. Hell, I owe half the damn group for my life. It's hard to adapt. You become so used to things being the way they are, day after day with no change. Sundays with the guys doing the same thing all the time but when something different comes along, something like this, this insanity, I guess you just have to change what you do and who you are and embrace it for what it is. Some of the people I've met here seem to thrive on this world, like they've been waiting for it. I guess that the real madness comes from trying to be normal. Trying to remain the same as before.'

- 'There's no such thing as normal no more, those that made it here today come from all over, drawn for one purpose, survival, and yes when the proverbial hits the fan you've got to stand fast and fight no matter what comes through those doors or walls.'

You don't owe us anything, just stay alive, help us to find a place we can be safe in and you keep alive what it was to be normal and every so often remind us otherwise we'll stray too far, and then there's no coming back.'

**\*The next part of the recording has been lost\***





## PAGE 21:

Rick was smarter than I thought he would be. He turned what I had planned to be an aggressive interview into a personal reflection of what I needed to see. Until now I have only seen him in reaction to events, as a force that responds with extreme violence and instinctive action. I labelled him as an animal but I was wrong. He is a man considered of his position, a man who has sacrificed his own morality so that the others can keep a hold of theirs. He makes the hard and desperate calls that no one else wants to.

He has shown me that my hope for things to return to how they were is futile. That I'll only end up driving myself crazy with dreams of things that cannot be.



## TAPE RECORDER: CONTINUED:

- 'Well it's getting dark, I guess we'd better stop and check the others. Is that it for today, are we making camp?'

- 'No not yet, there's more to be done. That gunfire is becoming more sporadic, they've probably retreated to lick their wounds, but we've got another problem.'

- 'What's that?'

- 'In all the confusion at Jim Bobs, they somehow managed to grab Tommy. They've probably taken him back to the train car, at least that's what I'm

planning on. We've got to get him back, we've got to sneak into Terminus without alerting them and break him out. The best time will be under cover of darkness, it's a full moon so we'll be ok.'

- 'You mean you're going out there? Now?'

- 'We can't wait, it's more dangerous to sit and we don't leave anyone behind, this is where we'll need your help.'

- 'Rick, I...'

- 'You'll be needing that gun.'

## PAGE 22

Everyone is gearing up for the mission to go and get Tommy and I just wanted to quickly write down this thought before we set off. Seeing these people preparing to fight for one of their own, not giving up or accepting to fate, has opened my eyes to what the future will really be. When the fighting is over and the Walkers have rotted away it'll be down to the survivors to rebuild a new world. How it is depends on the people, and these people are good. They know deep down what is right and they have given so much of themselves to stay on that path.

I feel like I can hope again. I feel like tomorrow will eventually arrive and when it does it will be sweet.

This is the end of all salvageable recordings or written materials found in the vicinity of the rucksack. The area was awash with blood. The only other items of note were a strip of human skin approximately thirteen inches long and a police issue service pistol.





# SHOTTIE PERFECTION

**LOOKING FORWARD TO SOME PRACTICAL THREE GUN SHOOTING THIS MONTH, JERRY NOONE IS IN PURSUIT OF SHOTGUN PERFECTION AND, WANTING TO HAVE SOMETHING SPECIFIC TO HIS REQUIREMENTS, HE ONCE AGAIN SAYS "GIVE IT TO A GEEK!"**

REGULAR READERS OF THIS FINE PUBLICATION may have noticed that I have a small obsession with shotguns (ever so tiny understatement there)! I'm a huge fan of the G&P Remington 870 models and even though I already have a couple of these in my "armoury", they are out and out "overfolder" tactical models; they are also "full length" which is no problem for skirmishing but they do tend to be a little unwieldy in confined spaces.

I've recently signed up for the first "Three Gun" practical shooting event being run by Xsite and, as I've been thinking about the discipline for some time, I decided that the time was right to create something bespoke to compete with. I already have my pistol and rifle set up for "Two Gun", so it really was just the shotgun that was missing from the equation. I therefore had a quick trawl on the interweb and saw that Land Warrior still had the G&P medium length model in stock and not only in stock but on special offer too!

By the time that the donor gun arrived I'd already started the ball rolling on the project by talking to my mate James at Paradigm Rifleworks ([paradigmrifleworks@gmail.com](mailto:paradigmrifleworks@gmail.com)), as he has the setup to cater from pretty much any custom work you can imagine. After seeing a "super-shorty" setup known as a "Border Patrol 870" I made up my mind that this style would

be exactly right for the intended end use but several things needed to happen before the donor would be ready for action.

My brief to James was to shorten the medium length barrel right back to the pump handle and then to fabricate some "ghost ring" iron sights. The donor gun came with just a pistol grip, so my part of the deal was to source a full butt as G&P had done these as accessory parts historically. Luckily I'm a member of a number of online airsoft groups so I just put out a general call for anyone that had one to hit me up. Jez from Armstrong Firearms came up trumps in this respect, with a butt he had in his spares box, although it was missing the attachment collar and fixing bolt.

Whilst the donor went off to James for him to work his magic, the butt duly arrived with me and a trip to the local DIY store soon provided a new fixing bolt. A little hunt through my tool box then provided the raw material for the collar; a radiator bleed key! This actually turned out to be exactly the right diameter and by neatly trimming it to length I was in business.

As is usual with James, regular pictorial updates of the project started to pop into the inbox and he detailed the progress with his usual fine attention to detail:



1: Start point.



2: Outer barrel length measured, then marked up.



3: Unscrew cap from end of magazine, then unscrew magazine tube from receiver.



4: Remove two grub screws (one each side of barrel), then slide outer barrel off.



5: Pull grip down to remove from bracket and arms.



6: Remove grip by unscrewing Philips head screw at back of receiver.



7: Remove two grub screws, one each side of receiver, then using a punch, remove pin-punch. This will allow the trigger guard to be removed.

Slide receiver off of working parts.





8: Remove magazine tube bracket.



9: Outer barrel cut to length using parting tool on lathe.



10: Cut end is then gently chamfered on the outside using a small file as the barrel rotates on the lathe.



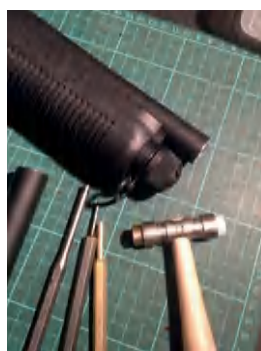
11: Outer barrel slid into place. Inner barrel excess measured using vernier.



12: Hop-up parts are hidden under a small grub screw. These must be removed...



13: Before removing roll pin and withdrawing inner barrel from the receiver. Inner barrel is then chopped to length and re-crowned (using the same method as used to chop the outer barrel).



14: Rebuild of the gun is reversal of the strip down. Leaving us with a far shorter barrel set.



15: The end result.

## SIGHTING IN!

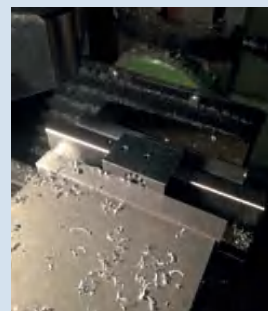
With the donor gun now with the correct length of barrel as requested James then went on to look at the sights and this was another complete fabrication from scratch!



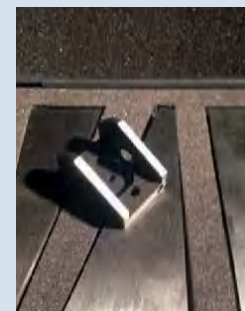
1: We start with a sight assembly scavenged from an old M16a2 and first it's stripped to its component parts.



2: The threaded section underneath the main part is then lopped off with a hacksaw.



3: And then the whole underside of the main part is then flattened off with a fly cutter on the mill.



4: This part is then clamped at 35° in the mill and the "wings" are cut down with an end mill.



# Badger Tac

Tuesday - Friday 12:00 - 18:00

Saturday 10:00 - 17:00

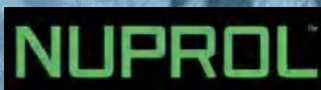
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5: This part is then flipped upside down, drilled and then tapped for an M4 threaded machine screw.



6: The adjustment dial is then turned down on the lathe and the whole assembly is assembled for test fitting.



7: Next up, a centreline is scribed on the receiver.



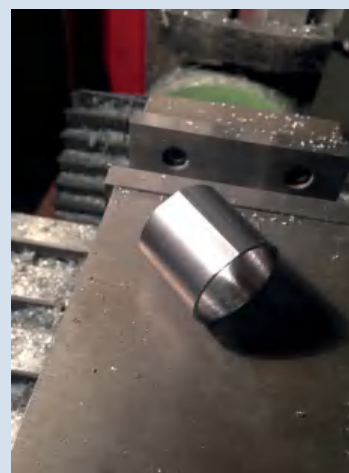
8: And then two 4mm holes are drilled in it.



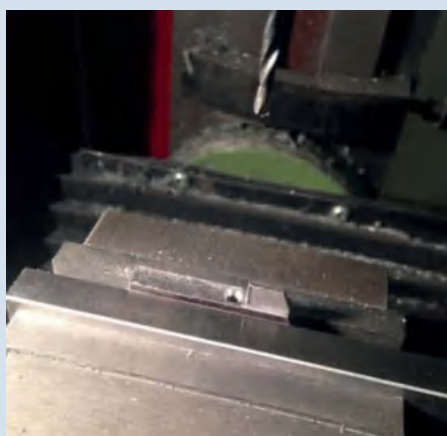
9: And the rear sight is test fitted.



10: Now for the front sight. A section of steel tube is turned so that it just slides over the outer barrel.



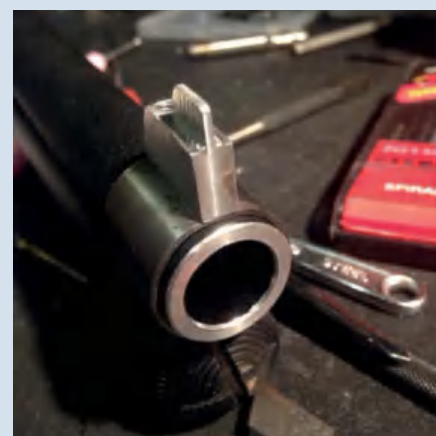
11: The top of this steel tube is then flattened on the mill and two holes drilled through it.



12: For the foresight blade some aluminium is milled to shape.



13: And then drilled and tapped for an M4 grub screw.



14: The front sight is then silver soldered in place and test fitted to the outer barrel.

With the fabrication now complete the gun was soon in the hands of the courier and heading on back to me. With the butt and attachment parts already in hand it was simply a case of putting that in place and my new shotgun was "good to go!" I'm lucky to have been around the airsoft community for a considerable time and I'm also blessed to have mates like James who really are experts in their field - and have both the right tools and the level of professionalism needed to pull off a

job like this.

If you have a project that you need done then ask around, find out who does good work and speak to them about your project. When you've agreed everything that needs to happen, as well as setting your budget then hand your donor gun over, just "Give It To A Geek" and you'll end up with exactly what you require!





# CAN YOU HEAR ME MOTHER?

**AIRSOFT ACTION WELCOMES NEW CONTRIBUTOR "FRENCHIE", WHO BRINGS US THE FIRST PART OF A NEW SERIES LOOKING AT HOW WE COMMUNICATE IN THE FIELD**

COMMS... YOU'D THINK IT WAS easy...

Communication is one of those things we take for granted and it's true that the human race (including airsofters) has never had so many options – the internet and everything associated with it and mobile phones have transformed the way we talk to each other over the past ten years.

There are situations, however, when all of this technology is either inappropriate or simply not available; mobile phones depend on a physical network of transceiver masts and even in the UK there are many so-called "not-spots" where there is simply no coverage. More importantly, you don't really want to have to whip your far-too-expensive iPhone out in the middle of a firefight! How can you overcome these restrictions when you are operating in places beyond the reach of the unaided human voice, or need to keep your hands free whilst still keeping touch with your team mates?

The most common option for airsofters is one of our older technologies – radio. In truth, radio underpins much of what we do these days – wireless networks are basically high

frequency radio networks and many companies with large sites use highly focussed radio transmitters to ensure network coverage of their whole operation. Beyond that, personal radios, "walkie-talkies", are still in extensive use both as licensed products and license-free. It's the latter, those systems that are license free to use that we are going to concentrate on but with a pause to consider the legalities of radio use.

In this series of articles, I'm going to look at the options available to airsofters, what sort of accessories are available and worth spending money on and importantly – and it should be important to you – what the law says you can do and why you really should do it. I will also take a look at some typical PMR handsets, ranging in price from about £35 for a pair to around £150 for a single handset.

## **PRIVATE MOBILE RADIO PMR446.**

The history of PMR446 in Europe began in 1997 with the decision of the European Radio Communications Committee to designate the 446 MHz frequency band as the option for



license-free radio communication, followed by further decisions that permitted the free use of equipment that conformed to the European standard. Ireland led the way, introducing the service in 1998, with the UK following suit in 1999. "Service" is a misnomer, PMR – Private Mobile Radio – is a set of specifications which, if conformed to, permit the free use of unlicensed radio communication equipment by anyone. Along with the frequency restriction, the other key feature of the Private Mobile Radio specification is power output – a PMR radio cannot transmit at more than 500mW – or half a watt. As a comparison, licensed business radios may transmit up to 5 watts of power, a substantial difference. The device must also have a fixed antenna, since choice of antenna can significantly affect power output.

Since 446 MHz is in the FM (UHF – Ultra High Frequency) band, this low output is key, restricting the useful range of PMR sets to below 10 km in anything other than ideal conditions. While it doesn't make them purely "line of sight" devices, urban environments or dense woodland can dramatically reduce their useful operating range. Why then would airsofters consider PMR radio as a suitable communication option for those looking to improve their inter-team communication?

There are a couple of compelling reasons; firstly cost, PMR radios can be bought from a few pounds. Granted for that sort of money you get the lowest specs. and the poorest performance but they do work. Moreover beyond the cost of batteries there are no further operating costs. Secondly interoperability – since PMR is a standard *all* PMR radios are capable of communicating with each other, regardless of make or model. This means that a mixed group of devices can transmit and receive from each other, it's not necessary that they all be the same.

## PRIVACY

One of the downsides of the PMR446 system is a lack of privacy despite having "Private" in the name; it is possible to listen to any PMR conversation if you have a PMR device and the transmitting set is in range. Some vendors make reference to "privacy" channels but this is misleading. PMR most commonly uses a system known as CTCSS – Continuous Tone-Coded Squelch System - which prevents you from *hearing* any conversations on the same channel which are not using the same "sub channel". You should remember that anyone listening to the base channel, say Channel 2, will hear *all* conversations on that channel, they just cannot speak to you without setting their device to the same sub-channel. There really isn't any privacy in private mobile radio.

## LEGAL ISSUES.

Providing your equipment conforms to the European PMR446 standard, it can be used freely within the UK and across Europe – no danger of infringing the law there. The problem (and there is a problem) is the increasing availability of cheap



Chinese-made programmable radios from the likes of Baofeng, Puxing and others which appear to offer more power and more options for ridiculously low prices.

To give you an idea of relative costs, a pair of Motorola T80 Extreme PMR walkie talkies will set you back between £60 - £100 here in the UK. A Baofeng UV-5R can be picked up on Amazon for about £20.00. Moreover the Baofeng has a claimed output of 5 watts, ten times the legal limit for PMR446. If you don't fully understand the implications that could be really attractive – more power must equal more range – mustn't it? It's not that simple and there are legal pitfalls all over the place as well. I'll use Baofeng as an example, not to single it out but simply because I'm familiar

with it. Any comments refer equally to other programmable radios.

The eight channels available to the PMR446 user are packed very tightly together, there is less than 0.1 MHz between channel 1 and channel 8 and the entire PMR frequency range only covers 446 MHz – 446.2MHz. Many of the programmable handsets cover a far wider frequency range, typically 130 – 178MHz, and 400 – 480MHz. Within those available frequencies there are many that you shouldn't be going anywhere near and others for which you will need a licence from OfCom (The Office of Communications), the government body that regulates the airwaves

**"PMR – PRIVATE MOBILE RADIO – IS A SET OF SPECIFICATIONS WHICH, IF CONFORMED TO, PERMIT THE FREE USE OF UNLICENSED RADIO COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT BY ANYONE."**





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in the UK. I have seen it suggested that setting your radio to use only the PMR frequencies, even though the power is too high, should "see you alright" – I beg to differ! OfCom is well aware that there is an issue with "high powered PMR446" use in the UK and are looking to counteract it. Should they receive a complaint, say from a legitimate PMR user who has been interrupted by your high-powered signal, it is technically easy for them to track down the offending user. Many businesses use PMR446 for their internal communications and they may well take issue with your tactical bon mots drowning out their daily labour. Do not make the mistake of thinking no-one cares.

There are other considerations. Many of these radios require programming via a PC to change frequencies, it's not difficult to set them up but if you don't spend some time learning about the various parameters that affect and control the handset it is very easy to turn your pocket rocket into a one-man jamming machine that will render every other radio on site useless. Having been the victim of just this I can tell you that it pisses people off big time...

PMR446 has made it seem that radio communication is really simple and if you stick to PMR it is. Beyond that there are a whole host of considerations and I make no claims to understanding all of them. I have spent some time digging, reading and asking questions of those who do know and what I learned convinced me that while there is nothing really wrong with programmable radios, airsofters need to be much better educated about radios and the law. There is a very useful Facebook page called Airsoft Comms – UK, if you want to know more visit it and read the information available. It's well-written and understandable and the guys behind it are licensed radio users of long standing. They'll be happy to answer questions should you have them.

Some people get unreasonably angry if you challenge them with regards to their radios, something I cannot get my head round. As far as they're concerned they bought a couple of sets off Amazon, charged them and they and their mate are now using them quite happily at Skrimish-In-The-Sky every fortnight. That their radios are running on frequencies assigned to the emergency services doesn't bother them in the slightest and they will get quite humpy if you point it out. I hate to be a buzz-kill but sorry, that sh\*t's illegal. What's more, it's unnecessary and here's why...

One of the most common complaints made about PMR446 is that the range is not particularly good. That's true and there are reasons for it but terrain, the biggest cause of range degradation, will affect a 5 watt Baofeng just as badly – goodbye advantage. I'm going to quote something written by Tim Jacobs over at the Airsoft Comms – UK page in full because it's really fundamental to understanding this – here comes the science!

*"The thing about PMR446 radios (any radio in fact) is that range is more dependent on RECEIVER quality than transmitter power. All PMR446 transmitters are legally limited to 500mW (0.5W). Making a radio transmitter is easy, so pretty much all PMR446 radios will transmit at, or near, that limit. That means the only way to get better range is to have a better receiver. In essence, transmitter range will be the same for every radio. What's important is the "receiver range", determined by its sensitivity. Cheap radios will have a cheap receiver, so receiving range will be more likely to be restricted. Many cheap programmable UHF radios available on eBay, such as made by Puxing and Baofeng can be tuned to the PMR446 frequencies. BUT even on low power, they often transmit over the legal power limit of 0.5 Watts. There's also another problem with those radios: Because they have such a wide frequency coverage, their receivers are LESS sensitive. A radio receiver is an amplifier. All amplifiers have a gain-bandwidth product. That number is constant, so if the amplifier needs to operate over a wide band, its gain is lower than if it has to work over a narrow band. PMR446 radios are built to peak only over the 8 frequencies used, so have better reception. That means that a Baofeng sitting right next to a dedicated PMR446 radio might not be able to hear a signal that the PMR446 one can."*

This doesn't mean that your Baofeng won't perform well but it certainly suggests that the advantage you thought you had may be illusory. What I can say is that if I put my Motorola

**"ANYONE LISTENING TO THE BASE CHANNEL, SAY CHANNEL 2, WILL HEAR ALL CONVERSATIONS ON THAT CHANNEL, THEY JUST CANNOT SPEAK TO YOU WITHOUT SETTING THEIR DEVICE TO THE SAME SUB-CHANNEL. THERE REALLY ISN'T ANY PRIVACY IN PRIVATE MOBILE RADIO."**

side by side with my UV-5R and set both to scan the PMR channels, the PMR handset picks up far more traffic.

There are some airsoft teams out there who use Baofengs and other programmable radios for their inter-team communications and do it properly, having obtained a Simple Light UK Licence from OfCom. This allows them to use the business frequencies allocated by the licence. They do this to keep their comms private rather than to see a dramatic improvement in power and range. The licence costs £75.00, last for 5 years and lays down a number of conditions. Visit [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk) for more information.

Next month we look at accessories and take a look at some typical PMR446 radios that are worthy of consideration.







# GETTING PAID TO PLAY

**IN THIS ISSUE'S DEBATE, GARETH "GADGE" HARVEY RAISES THE TRICKY QUESTION OF TEAM SPONSORSHIP**

THIS MONTH WE'VE BEEN DISCUSSING "team sponsorship" in the *Airsoft Action* offices. Many of us came to Airsoft via the route of "the sport that dare not speak its name"... Oh alright then, paintball.

Now if you've finished retching hear me out.

Back in the day, paintball was bloody good fun (before we discovered airsoft of course) but it was also damn expensive. An enthusiastic days shooting would set you back at least £50 and if you had a particularly heavy trigger finger day costs of over £100 were not unusual... unless of course you had sponsorship.

Most players, of course, going along to a works social or a Sunday walk-on game never even considered getting sponsorship but in team and league play it was rife. I myself played "semi-professional" for my local site and competed against teams from around the country. Even at this low level we were sponsored by our site (meaning free paintballs, not to be sniffed at) and sponsored by a marker manufacturer (so very, very discounted guns) which meant that even as a teenager, I could afford to play on a weekly basis. Without the site providing ammo and a seriously "mates rates" top end marker I wouldn't be able to afford to compete at all!

But sponsorship also had its downsides.

Paintball went from being "playing army in the woods" (like airsoft is) to "dayglow speedball" with logos everywhere and flashy-looking markers. I wouldn't say it killed the game but it's created a very big gulf between "casual play" and "tournament play", where it seemed that those with the best sponsors got the best kit.

Talking to the "industry" it seems that nearly every week



## "THE WHOLE OBSESSION WITH SPONSORSHIP SEEMS TO HAVE COME FROM AMERICA. THE AMERICAN SCENE REALLY HAS PUSHED THESE "AIRSOFT CELEBRITIES" INTO THE SPOTLIGHT."

at least one team of cheeky hopefuls sends a store an email or has an enthusiastic phone call in which they punt for a chance at being sponsored.

But is there any mileage in it? Would you play in a team sponsored by, let's say, "G&G" if you got a free AEG but had to wear a G&G logo on your combats and only use their BB chuckers? Would having to wear, say, "5.11" combats only cramp your style, or would you be overjoyed at the chance to get buckshee clobber?

Here's what you had to say.

**Miguel Oliveira:** "In the start of the summer my team was contacted by Gunfire. They were interested in sponsoring my team. Right now we have a good partnership. We share their news, use a Gunfire patch and use the flag to take some team photos. They were kind enough to equip us with an Atacs AU uniform, a lot of bbs, gas, free shipping and great discounts. We weren't forced to change our way of playing or anything like that. So in our case it worked out great. Of course it's a bit different to be sponsored by a single brand."

**Sean BE:** "It's an interesting concept but my initial thoughts would be that it may breed elitism amongst some of the bigger teams who would naturally attract sponsorship. An idea would be to have an awarding body that divided the money up amongst teams. Another option would be sponsored games with prize money that the teams could use appropriately (this would encourage teams to travel if by taking part they could cover expenses etc.). However after all that I would prefer the sponsors to use the money to promote Airsoft as a recognised UK Sport!"

**Matthew Philpott:** "I really don't like the idea of sponsorship but that is more in relation to the types of games I enjoy. It would be hard to feel in the zone about a MilSim, FilmSim or LARP event if I was forced to wear a logo on my back. At present the idea of tournament play airsoft isn't really the scene I would ever be interested in and it's the only way that sponsoring would be relevant."

**Rob Campbell:** "I'm fortunate enough to have played for/managed a sponsored team and as you quite rightly point out, it's a double-edged sword. It's definitely tempting getting samples/discounts in turn for some promo shots and wearing patches but it's equally restrictive, tying you/your team mates to a specific brand for the duration. The negative impact, for me at least, comes more from sponsored reviewers, whose opinions are surely less than objective when it comes to kit kindly provided by a business sponsoring them."

**Muzz Murray:** "Shop or manufacturer sponsorships can be so different. Just saying you're sponsored because a shop throws some of their own brand BBs at you and offers you a little discount to make you feel



special don't quite cut the mustard. Being noticed on the field of play and acquiring a proper deal from a reputable brand name that wants to use you to advertise as many of their product as possible... now that's Ally!"

**Matt Furey-King:** "Keep consumerism off of the field. It already dominates every other aspect of the hobby. I'm a sportsman there to play, and escape the bulls\*\*\*, I'm not there as a target for another marketing campaign. The gear should be subservient to the game not the other way around."

**Pete Dunn:** "Sponsorship, in general, is b\*ll\*\*\*s. It brings out the worst in people, as they have to perform for their "sponsors". I was in a very successful, heavily sponsored paintball team back in the 90's and, it was VERY political and very results oriented. Airsoft is not a competitive sport, as there is far too much scope for cheating. If there is pressure to win, then the cheating will increase."

**Carl Baddeley:** "I played all over Europe for a "sponsored" paintball team and unless airsoft wants to play in a 150 x 75 metre blow-up field then NO!! It needs to attract TV rights to appeal to the people who play (or pay) and airsoft is NEVER going to have mainstream appeal."

**Dave Renniks:** "The whole obsession with sponsorship seems to have come from America. The American scene really has pushed these "airsoft celebrities" into the spotlight and for whatever reason,

they have a lot of manufacturers and stores pushing to endorse them in return for plugs on YouTube, Instagram etc. Some of those people are great at what they do... others are, to be honest, terrible. Almost all of them have backing from retailers to push a product. Either way, the knock on effect is that there are now loads of "team pages" popping up every week and some people are seriously unhealthy obsessed with getting sponsored. It's often a lot of new players who want to get all the fame and endorsements they see in these American YouTube videos without having to put the work in. I don't want the UK scene to turn into the US scene. We don't need all that GMR bullshit.

"Have a good time, enjoy yourself. Make good content. If someone offers you a fun deal on stuff, go for it but don't be a dick about it. Getting a discount on tactical

**"I'M A SPORTSMAN THERE TO PLAY, AND ESCAPE THE BULLS\*\*\*, I'M NOT THERE AS A TARGET FOR ANOTHER MARKETING CAMPAIGN."**







## "I'VE BEEN ASKED TO SPONSOR TEAMS BUT I WOULDN'T DO IT, I'D RATHER HAVE MY PRODUCTS USED AND RECOMMENDED ON THEIR OWN MERIT THAN OUT OF OBLIGATION DUE TO SPONSORSHIP."

gear doesn't make you a better player and having a thousand Instagram followers doesn't make you immune to BBs."

**Timothy Nicholls:** "As a shop owner and site owner, I do sponsor our home team some but this is only cheap bits and bobs etc. I really don't see it as sponsorship, more "mates rates"."

**Rob Campbell:** "The biggest argument against sponsorship is that it leads to elitism. I can say unequivocally that the exact opposite is my experience, with one of the sponsors I worked with actually insisting we proactively promoted fair play within the hobby - that was a stipulation of the sponsorship agreement. You won't find an sponsored airsoft player/team who's agreement is based on winning/performance, it's more likely to be based on quality photos from the field that can be used and a bit of brand representation."

**Gareth Davenport:** "My main issue is "team" sponsorship rather than individual players. I am all for a single player who exemplifies good sportsmanship being supported as they, in my opinion, should be an advocate to the casual players, or first timers who turn up to site. They are the ones who lead by example and I have no issue with minor celebrity status as a result. Teams, however, in my opinion tend to promote the wrong type of play in many cases (though not all). More often than not my days play has had a negative impact from a team turning up and wanting to prove they are the best. Being put on the same side or against said teams has more often than not resulted in a day of horrific cheat calling. If teams started to emerge that left the ego at home for fear of losing sponsorship, then great but I think a lot needs to happen in the sport before real sponsorship is viable."

**Peter Bigpete:** "I used to be in the modified car scene and had thousands of free and discounted gear thrown at my car, including a £6k worth high end sound system. They put absolutely no pressure on me as sponsors whatsoever and even chuckled at some of my more outlandish behaviour lol."

"Does it encourage elitism??? Well that depends on the team or person. Just about any positive gain can lead to a person turning into an absolute dick whether it be getting Gucci gear, hot girlfriend, high earning job etc. some people remain the same and others grow a cock on their forehead."

**Nitro Gary:** "If you want to see "Airsoft" go the way of ANY other hobby/sport/Interest, then promote sponsorship. I used to be heavily involved in RC Car racing a long time ago and sponsorship killed it. We need to clarify individual sponsorship and support, they are two distinctly different things. If an Importer wants to PAY for an event, to promote their products, then OK its (not) free advertising but at least it's in the open. But making the attendee's pay entry, use their own kit, all for the "good" name of the "Importer/Supplier/Manufacturer" then is not really sponsorship!"

**Matthew Adams:** "To be honest I find a lot of site teams, whether sponsored or not, can become elitist anyway. Put a logo on someone and they will either embrace it to help promote the sport or to Lord it over other people."

**Mark Sutherland:** "I've been asked to sponsor teams but I wouldn't do it, I'd rather have my products used and recommended on their own merit than out of obligation due to sponsorship."



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# NOT SURPLUS TO REQUIREMENTS

**AIRSOFT ACTION'S ROVING REPORTER, LES LEE, RE-VISITS AN AIRSOFT RETAILER HE HAS BEEN TO BEFORE, TO SEE HOW THINGS HAVE PROGRESSED**

THERE'S NOTHING I ENJOY MORE than visiting an Airsoft shop (well almost nothing) and I am one of the blessed few that gets to do this on a regular basis, after all, somebody has to bring you the up to date news on what's hitting the shelves in these BB-licious retail outlets! To visit an Airsoft shop is a wonderful (and usually costly for me) experience but to visit one of the finest and most progressive stores in the South of England puts me in a world of happiness.

Crawley Surplus Store in West Sussex has exploded into a mass of Airsoft goodies, along with every other piece of surplus kit that you may need, making it that all important "one stop shop". From the moment you step foot inside the door, you will feel a warmth at the top of your thighs and this could be one of two things - the second being your credit card burning a hole in your pocket!

Some of you may remember that a few years ago I carried out a review at Crawley Surplus for *Airsoft Action*. This was shortly after they had relocated from a small, cramped shop in the town centre to a much larger unit just down the road on a commercial estate. The benefits being that first and foremost, they could cater for the customer in a more person-friendly environment offering a copious amount of spaciousness, a bright and encouraging shop floor, acres of wall space just screaming out to have guns, lots of guns hooked up, ample free parking and a host of other much-needed and welcoming features. This also allowed Daniel and his dedicated team of loyal and knowledgeable staff to branch out deeper into the ever-evolving world of Airsoft, as demand had dictated that this was what his customers

wanted more of and so it was clear where things were headed. If I was to hazard a guess, I would say that at the time of the move, Daniel had little, if any, idea just how the demand for Airsoft products was going to overthrow his history of Army Surplus kit and kaboodle.

Over the years, I have seen the balance of Crawley Surplus' stock change from a good selection of RIFs, two tones and related accessories to a phenomenal stock of Airsoft gear (especially RIFs), which has placed it firmly and competitively alongside the country's leading "Airsoft only" retailers but with the added advantage that everything you would need for a weekend or any special event can be found under one, well-lit roof.





One thing that you can always be sure of at Crawley Surplus is a genuine and very warm welcome. A cracking team of staff are on hand to greet you and be available to assist if needed. There is no pressure selling, just a "we're here if you need anything" stance so that you can relax and drool over the huge amount of stock that this ultra-modern showroom has on display. But should you need any advice, these guys know their stock and their function from the inside out and are always eager to assist. For example, many shops have an indoor shooting range and Crawley Surplus is no exception and that would be when you need one of the team to set things up (target, eye pro, etc) and give you the opportunity to shoulder the weapon. I can personally vouch for this because not too long ago I was set on buying a particular GBBR and I wasn't at all disappointed having test fired it, however, a suggestion was made that before me and my money went our separate ways, perhaps I should try a similar gun. I was so glad that I was given that choice because from that moment on my love affair with the GHK G5 began and I've never looked back.

So having seen the huge increase in Airsoft goods and also the close link with Dogtag Airsoft, one of the South's premier Airsoft sites just down the road, I felt it was about time to update our readers and ask Daniel the owner just how things were coming along these days and to give us a heads-up on how things were progressing.

**Les:** Daniel, would you first remind us how it all began, please?

**Daniel:** The business was originally started back in 1961 by my Father trading in actual Army Surplus clothing and equipment. Keeping up with the times through the 60s & 70s this evolved to include all manner of items, from Monkee Boots, to Harrington Jackets (both still stocked today). We sold our first air pistol in 1994 and Airsoft items started coming in a few years after that. We really started to up our game on Airsoft in the mid-2000s, once we realised we had someone who could repair the AEGs that broke (we wanted to make sure that everything we had even at the beginning had back up) we could really bring in some of the better and higher quality AEGs. Then the VCRA hit and we figured everything was going to stop as this was a law that affected practically everything we did, so it was adapt or die! But stop it we didn't, we looked at this and made a decision that if someone had to have a two tone AEG we would make sure it was well done!

It was at this point that we realised our traditional, old-school shoe box shop on the High Street was no longer sufficient for what we were doing! So in 2011 we moved into our new premises, took over an industrial building and made it into a one stop shop for outdoor shooting sports! Since then



we have hugely increased our vision with good stocks of G&G, ICS, WE and even a few Tokyo Marui pistols. Our repairs & upgrades section is rushed off their feet and we are an Authorised Service Centre for Air Arms rifles.

**Les:** Tell our readers about your team of dedicated staff.

**Daniel:** We have a few people Working here...

Dan Levene (the Boss and yours truly) hasn't played Airsoft for a long time but they keep threatening to drag me to the local site...

Dan "Racket" Kennedy (the Tech and if you hear someone making a huge racket while someone's trying to take a phone call it's probably him!): Airsofter.

Steve "Spud" Burford (Yeah, don't ask!): Airsofter.

Aaron (AK) Kendrick (Master of our website photography): Airsofter.

Mike Chang (Saturday Rapsallion): Airsofter.

Phil Harvey who played a few years back and Edward Mealin (both work in Dispatch).

**Les:** In 3 years I have seen the increase in your range of Airsoft products and some related changes. Can you break this down a little, for example how much of your overall trade is Airsoft related....that kinda thing.

**Daniel:** We have hugely increased our range over the past few years, there's just too many cool guns out there and they keep bringing out more (I'm looking at you, WE P90!). We now have well over 100 rifles on display at any one time. We'd have more Airsoft gear out from our warehouse but we just don't have the space and we have more than doubled the amount of RIFs from 3 years ago – that is how much things have grown! Anything that comes in and works well gets expanded, that's why we stock so many G&G & ICS guns, great value for money, they last, they are great guns on the field and if anything does go wrong they are easy to repair (within the first 3 months free of charge).

**Les:** What brands do you stock and why?

**Daniel:** The G&G Combat Machine series is a perfect starter gun for anyone looking for affordable quality (I know a few experienced Airsofters that use them as a back-up, then just break them out for fun some days!). Great value, great quality and very reliable... No idea how G&G managed it!

ICS: Good quality, reliable and great guns, they do what is debatably the best SA80 AEG on the market today.







**WE:** A great range of rifles and pistols. They've knocked the quality up several notches in the past few years and as we have spare parts support from WE Europe we try to stock as many commonly used spares as possible (almost all nozzles, feed lips, valves 'O'-rings etc.) – and not at all because I want to make sure I've got spares for my MSK, not in the slightest!

**Bolt:** Recoil is fun!

**Ares:** The new Amoeba (and VZ-58) range has really changed it up for everyone, built in programmable trigger computers that changed the game for everyone else, G&G has already started to follow suit and we'll see who jumps next!

**Speed:** CNC made parts direct from Canada, quality is awesome

**Guarder:** quality spare parts that fit!

**SHS:** great high torque motors & great gears!

**Maple Leaf:** Hop rubbers, AEG, VSR & gas pistols, very good hop rubbers!

**Tokyo Marui:** Do I need to say it? Quality... Quality... Quality!!!

**Les:** So what is trending at the moment?

**Daniel:** Probably the most popular thing at the moment is the G&G SR Combat Machines, programmable trigger computers that protect your battery and allow you to select 3 shot burst functions for under £200??? What's not to love?

**Les:** Tell me a little about your connections with Dog Tag Airsoft and any other parties.

**Daniel:** We have a few connections all around the local area. If you buy a skirmish-ready AEG from us you get a free game day at the local skirmish site (Holmbush DOGTAG Airsoft, a fantastic site). All of our staff Airsofters play there when they get the chance as the site is so well run and again, numbers are growing there as well so it's good for both of us!

Also 3 of our staff are members of CSS Metal Ops Airsoft Team, who play at as many of the local sites as possible but

mainly Zed Adventures Battle Lakes (especially when they do their excellent special events). Metal Ops extends our ethos of customer service (well kinda) in that the main core principal is fair play, the ability to take a hit is possibly more important than dishing it out!

**Les:** What makes your customer service excel more than most.

**Daniel:** We've been in business for 50+ years and that comes with a solid understanding that the service is the most important thing there is. If your rifle goes wrong we will still be here to fix it for you. If it goes wrong within warranty we will get it collected from you free of charge and get it back to you free of charge. If it goes wrong outside of warranty we will get it sorted for you for as little as possible. We make sure our address is on the website (Authors note: Check out the website, it is seriously good), so if for any reason you need to pay us a visit you can and we also have a direct phone number so you can get advice (technical or not) from us direct anytime within business hours.

**Les:** Finally Daniel, to sum it all up, where in our crazy and ever-evolving world of Airsoft does Crawley Surplus stand and where are you guys heading?

**Daniel:** I want our customers to enjoy the experience of coming down to Crawley Surplus Store, seeing the layout of the store, being able to walk around, touch and feel the vast amount of guns we have on show. There is no better buying experience than being able to pick up and feel the lines of a gun, then being able to choose the accessories to go with your choice. It is much nicer than looking at photos on your computer screen and then having to wait for your gun to arrive, then realising you may have chosen the wrong gun or it looked different in the picture! Whereas here, you can walk in, choose from an amazing choice and walk out with an item you have had time to feel and try before you buy. Accessories fitted in store, AEGs and GBBRs chronographed and tested in-house, if they're hot (or not) we'll sort them out for you.

**Les:** Thank you Daniel, a very in-depth and conclusive insight into your store and all it has to offer the army of (Airsoft) Military, Operators, Mercenaries, Special Forces and Black Ops teams out there all looking to increase their armoury or indeed (and this is an underrepresented value in my opinion) purchase their first airsoft weapon.

Our newbies of today are taking our sport/hobby/pastime forward to become our warriors of tomorrow.

Les OUT!



## CONTACT DETAILS:

Crawley Surplus Store  
Stephenson Way  
Three Bridges  
Crawley  
West Sussex

[www.surplusstore.co.uk](http://www.surplusstore.co.uk)  
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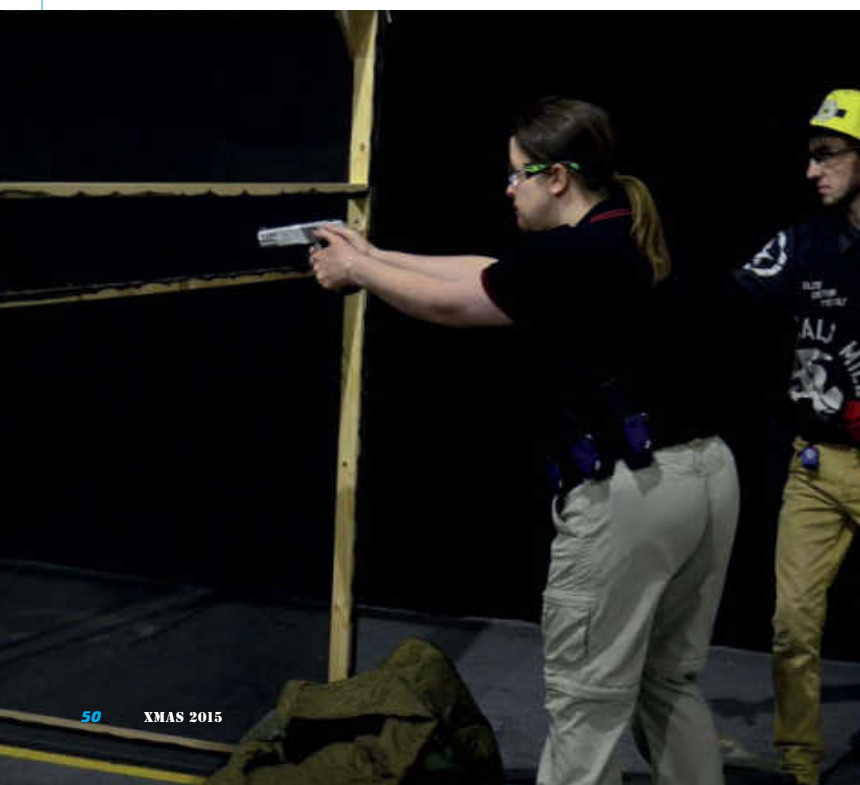
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# PRACTICAL PISTOL – NORTH & SOUTH

NIGE FINDS OUT JUST HOW FAR PRACTICAL SHOOTERS ARE PREPARED TO TRAVEL AS HE CALLS IN ON A COUPLE OF AIRSOFT PRACTICAL PISTOL MATCHES.



AS REGULAR READERS WILL KNOW, this magazine is a supporter of all things airsoft and Airsoft Practical Pistol is one of the fastest growing shooting sports in the UK. Now, while I would like to think that we have played our own, small part in the growth in popularity of the sport, it is far, far outweighed by the sheer will and determination of the shooters themselves to make it a success - and nowhere was that more evident than at a couple of matches I recently attended.

## HALO MILL

On the 4th October I made my way up to Halo Mill, in Huddersfield, to attend one of their regular matches. Also there was Paul Wignell, ASG's UK Sales Manager and he had brought along a bunch of pistols and a fully-kited EVO to salivate over - and they certainly seemed to grab the attention.

Halo Mill is, well, an old mill - an old textile mill to be precise - and is ideally located on a main road, not that its brick exterior gives any clue as to what goes on inside these days. The guys from Patrol Base have turned the upper floor into a veritable labyrinth of corridors and rooms, making it a perfect venue for CQB. I wandered around for a while and realised that you can get yourself turned around really quickly - and that was with the lights on, I understand that "dark" games are "interesting"! However, the venue's "rooms" also make an ideal location for a series of challenging practical stages.



By the time I arrived the match was in full swing and it didn't take a genius to see that the shooters were clearly enjoying both the venue and the challenge. Many of the shooters had been at the European Championship and it was good to catch up with them again and hear their feedback, which was generally positive.

What did surprise me, however, was the distance some of them had travelled, with one couple driving up from Devon the night before and scheduled to drive back down that evening, to go to work! Now that is what I call dedication!

As with (pretty much) all matches I've been to, the atmosphere was one of friendly rivalry and anyone who had a problem was quickly helped by others. It was also really good to see younger shooters taking part - and they were certainly giving some of the older ones a run for their money.

When the shooting stopped, the scores were calculated and these were the results:

## OPEN DIVISION

### Juniors Category

Winner: Ben Farrar

Second: Jake Wrightson

Third: Martin Dyson



### Ladies Category

Winner: Tina Palmones

Second: Dawn Williams

Third: Mina Vellerico

### Seniors Category

Winner: Jay Palmones

Second: Luis Everton

Third: Gavin Bradbury

## STANDARD DIVISION

### Seniors Category

Winner: Craig Meegan

Second: Alistair Mustard

Third: Ian Getherum

## EAST BARNET SHOOTING CLUB

Exactly a week later I found myself at (almost) the opposite end of the country, in London - well, East Barnet to be precise, which, as you travel down the A1, is just past the M25 and little to the left.

I like visiting EBSC as it was here that I was first introduced to Airsoft Practical Pistol by a friend and, as they also do "real" shooting here, the place has a certain "smell" - of spent cartridges and gun oil - that brings back memories of shooting at the range we had at my school (I can't imagine any school having a rifle range in 2015) - we had our own Armoury too! Anyway, I digress...

I mentioned earlier "the sheer will and determination" to make Airsoft Practical Pistol a success in the UK and so I guess I should not have been surprised to see many of the faces from the previous Sunday also at East Barnet - including the couple from Devon! Such is their passion for the sport that some shooters will be competing in European competitions this year and, if all goes well, the World Championship in 2017 (when the UKPSA - United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association - hope to enter a Team GB).

Forty-odd participants had turned up and the Club was buzzing with activity, as pistols were prepared (in the correct area, of course) and shooters got ready for the day's competition. I decided to have a quick look at some of the stages and bumped into Paul Courtney and Justin Cooper, from Watford PPC, who had organised the match and built the stages. I am glad I did, as I had a bit of a "WTF!" moment when I first saw Stage 3 - eight paper targets, thirteen poppers and one, very inconveniently-placed no-shoot, most of which were concealed behind two rows of offset screens. The shooter had to remain within a rectangular area to the front of the screens and could only engage the targets by shooting through







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the narrow gap created as they moved from side to side. In “skirmish” terms it would be like taking out the opposition by shooting from a room on one side of a corridor, into the one opposite, through open doors but with barricades in the way. Clearly, someone had been on too much Red Bull when they designed it but I had no doubt that all the shooters would enjoy the challenge.

With 12 stages to get through, no time was lost in getting things under way and with just a (very welcome) break for a pizza a lunchtime (which was provided by the organisers - thanks guys), everything was done and dusted pretty much on schedule. The scores were entered and final results computed and they were:

### OPEN DIVISION

#### Ladies Category

Winner: Tina Palmones  
Second: Dawn Williams

#### Seniors Category:

Winner: Steve Birtwhistle  
Second: Jon Cull  
Third: Tim Wyborn

#### Super Seniors Category

Winner: Paul Van den Bosch  
Second: Trevor Sinclair

### STANDARD DIVISION

#### Juniors Category

Winner: Matt Wyborn  
Second: Paul Wyborn  
Third: Alex Baldwin

#### Ladies Category

Winner: Eluned Pritchard

#### Seniors Category

Winner: Danny Yau  
Second: Mark Van den Bosch

#### Super Seniors Category

Winner: Mike Cripps

### THE OVERALL MATCH RESULTS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

#### Open Division

Winner: Jay Palmones - 871.5199 points  
Second: Paul Courtney - 841.3615 points  
Third: Steve Birtwhistle - 801.5170 points

#### Standard Division

Winner: Matt Wyborn - 870.7019 points  
Second: OB Tanasen - 811.2397 points  
Third: Justin Cooper - 793.0195 points

As this was a “Club” competition, you are only allowed to enter one Division and as Matt had already taken the Juniors, OB was awarded the win in this Division.

I keep promising myself that one day I will find the time to strap on a pistol and have a go, as I find the challenge of controlled, consistently fast and accurate shooting quite fascinating. There are also moves to introduce other forms of Airsoft Practical Shooting and by the time this issue goes on sale, the first “3-Gun” event will have taken place at Xsite. The event was fully booked almost as soon as it was announced and I am convinced that it might just be the “cross-over” between “practical” and “skirmish” that airsofters have been waiting for. Whatever happens (or should that be “happened”) you will be able to read about it in the next issue of *Airsoft Action*.





# COLD WAR COMBATANT: GREAT BRITAIN

GARETH "GADGE" HARVEY TAKES A LOOK CLOSER TO HOME, AT A PERIOD WHEN GREAT BRITAIN WAS STRUGGLING TO COME TO TERMS WITH POST-WAR REALITY



British Infantryman, late 1980s

FROM WORLD SUPERPOWER TO international policeman, post war Great Britain struggled to adapt to its new role in world politics in the shadow of the USA.

Great Britain began WWII as a global superpower and emerged as a broken victor, massively in debt to its allies and with a crumbling empire. Having fought to free Europe and the World from oppression and occupation Britain was morally obliged to let much of its empire go, much to the delight of its US allies who had coveted Britain's dominions and sought to break up the empire.

While the United States had joined in the fight against the Axis primarily to ensure world freedom, a knock-on effect was the dismantling of the British Empire and territorial gain by allowing Britain to succeed territories and bases to the US in return for "lend lease" war materiel. Furthermore, Britain's ability to "call the shots" had been removed during the war, as US commanders took overall responsibility of the allies in the West. Although very much still "allies" the start of the Cold War saw Britain take the role of the junior partner in the alliance.

Britain's WWII army had been huge and while victorious, a huge army was still required to police and garrison the war-torn and unstable areas of the world. As well as the very real duties in keeping a reeling world in order, a new threat emerged in 1945, that of "World communism". Many in the free world believed that Communist expansion would happen, as one country after another fell to communist-backed uprisings in a so called "domino effect". Conscription during WWII had brought millions of men to the colours and this was continued in the form of National Service, the process in which able bodied adult males in the UK would serve two years in the Army, Navy or Air Force alongside the regulars. This forced military service was seen as a very necessary precaution to the British Government that expected to be at war with Russia at any moment.

## POST WAR TRIAL BY FIRE

While a global war thankfully never occurred, National Service would see its inductees serve in theatres of conflict across the globe, as Britain fulfilled its part as a UN (and later NATO) member in small wars and peacekeeping actions. Britain's first real post war trial would be the 1948 Malayan Emergency, in which the nation attempted to stop communist backed insurgents from overthrowing the establishment in Malaya. The Emergency was very much a "National Serviceman's" war, in which the conscript youth bore the brunt of the legwork and assisted elite SAS patrols in hunting down and destroying guerrilla camps, using a "hearts and minds" approach to win over the local people. Much of the uniform worn in Malaya was originally "Chindit"-type WWII jungle kit but soon "44 pattern" jungle clothes and webbing were issued, along with the No5 rifle, commonly known as the "Jungle Carbine".



The Malayan campaign was a solo success for the recovering newly formed and British led "Commonwealth", proving the value of national servicemen just in time for the epic UN commitment to providing troops to help stem the influence of communism in South East Asia.

The British Army entered the 1950 Korean War largely armed and equipped as it had ended WWII. Joining the USA in a gambit to stop communist expansion from North Korea and aided by South Korea, the British Army would fight the North Korean forces to a standstill in 1953, ending the war with an uneasy ceasefire and armistice that still stands to this day. Serge khaki wool battledress, 37 pattern webbing, Lee Enfield rifles and MKIII steel helmets would have been familiar to the fathers of the Korean Wars conscripts (and in fact many WWII veterans fought in Korea). Also seeing service in Korea was Britain's "44 pattern" jungle webbing equipment and in the hotter seasons, the same Jungle kit would be worn as in the Malayan conflict.

Shortly after the Korean War the British Army found itself in another "small war" fighting the Mau Mau rebels in Kenya. Again bright and fit national servicemen led by the regular army won a resounding (if sometimes controversial) victory over the indigenous tribesmen. The years of British victory would, however, soon see a downturn. In 1956 Britain and France joined forces to secure the Suez Canal and prevent Egyptian forces gaining control of it. Elite brigades of paratroopers, Royal Marines and French Foreign Legionnaires scored numerous military successes but were brought to the negotiating table and forced to withdraw after the USA put immense political pressure on the allies. A humiliated Britain withdrew from the conflict and the "special relationship" between the two countries soured somewhat.

## TEAM BRITAIN – WORLD POLICE

The 1960s would see Britain aid many of its Arab allies in counter insurgency operations and most notably the Omanis, Iranians and Jordanians in ending the Dhofar rebellion.

Once again an underfunded British Army (most notably SAS advisor teams) would fight its campaign with largely WWII

desert war equipment, although by this time the outstanding 7.62mm SLR "Self Loading Rifle" had replaced the aging Lee Enfield in the hands of the infantry. The SLR would also prove its worth in the 1963 Borneo confrontation in which Britain, Australia and Malaysia would take on Indonesia and fight a hard-fought jungle war reminiscent of the Malayan Emergency. Newer jungle green uniforms, 58 pattern webbing, GPMG machine guns and Sterling SMGs would come to the forefront in this explosive flashpoint and be a familiar sight on British soldiers for years to come. As with the conflict in Malaya nearly a decade before, free world forces in Borneo would be victorious, ending communist aspirations in the region.

The conflict that would engulf the British Army for decades was oddly not a "war" but a "police action". But to the men on the ground on both sides, the euphemistically titled "Troubles" were a very real war. This innocuous sounding event would, however, take the lives of hundreds of British Soldiers and wear the army to near exhaustion until its end in the late 1990s.

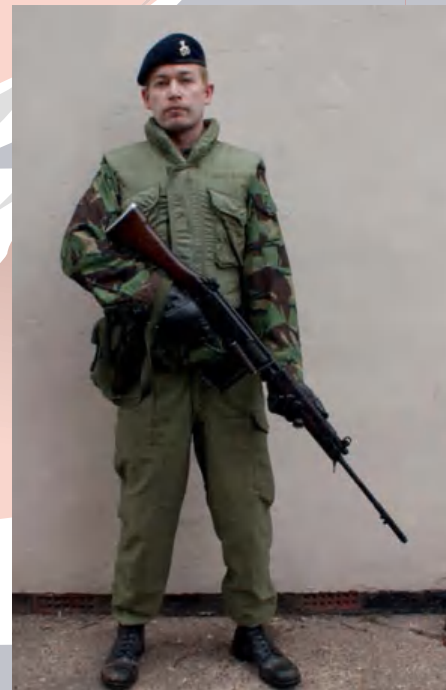
While "the troubles" in Northern Ireland are forever remembered as a conflict between Catholic Irish Paramilitaries and the British Army, it's ironic that the British Army first became involved to protect minority catholic groups from protestant violence! Over time the battle lines became muddled and often heavy-handed responses from the British Army polarised the factions and, by the 1970s, the army would find themselves fighting a vicious shadow war against well-trained and determined militants; a shadow war in which covert intelligence gathering and surveillance was as much, if not more, important than foot patrols and riot squads. The "troubles" would also see the introduction of body armour to the British Army (originally Vietnam war US surplus vests), proving the value of protecting the individual soldier. The thirty or more years spent policing Northern Ireland would perhaps see the British Army's weapons and equipment change more than it had ever done before in a comparable timeframe. The army entered "the troubles" wearing the 1960 pattern olive green combat suit, hobnailed "ammo boots", 58 pattern webbing and WWII era steel helmets. By the time it had left Belfast, the British "Tommy" would be wearing body armour, camouflaged 90 pattern combat suits, MK6 ballistic nylon helmets, PLCE webbing and chest rigs and toting the SA80 series of 5.56mm infantry weapons.

## CRISIS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

Britain's Cold War "swan song" is without a doubt "Operation Corporate"; the British Government's campaign to recapture the Falkland Islands after it they been seized by an Argentinian Military Junta.

Britain's once mighty army had by 1982 been reduced to around 200,000 serving regular soldiers, backed up by around 200,000 reservists and Territorial Army soldiers (National Service having been abandoned in 1960). Even though the manpower of the army was at an all-time low, more daunting was the army's lack of combat equipment such as helicopters, troop transports, air portable armour and other such materiel. The idea of sailing a Battle Group 3,000 miles across the world to launch a seaborne invasion to recapture an island populated by a few hundred people and of no real value, seemed foolish and impossible to many in the world community. Undaunted, however, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher sent the "Task Force" to the South Atlantic to wrest control of the islands from the Junta.

Upon reaching the islands (many troops travelled there on civilian cruise liners due to a shortage of military shipping)



British Army,  
Northern Ireland  
1973



British Infantryman, Falklands War





British Infantry, 1960s

**“BRITAIN’S COLD WAR “SWAN SONG” IS WITHOUT A DOUBT “OPERATION CORPORATE”; THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT’S CAMPAIGN TO RECAPTURE THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AFTER IT THEY BEEN SEIZED BY AN ARGENTINIAN MILITARY JUNTA.”**

Parachute Regiment, Suez Crisis



British Infantry, Korean War



was ill equipped for the appalling weather of the islands. Many were issued windproof or arctic parkas but many made do with quilted combat jacket liners, woolly jumpers and fully lined 68 pattern combat suits. The biggest failing in British equipment was the poorly designed “DMS” direct moulded sole boot, which caused many trench foot casualties as it had no provision to allow water to drain out of a soaked boot. Frostbite and trench foot would be ever-present enemies to the Task Force but in a short and aggressive campaign, the British seized control of the islands; but it was a close run thing, the Task Force had nearly run out of ammunition and its men were exhausted.

The Falklands Campaign gave Britain and the British Army a massive publicity boost and elevated Britain to the status of “World Power” again in the eyes of many but it was the end of Britain’s ability to fight an independent war. Just a few years later the end of the cold war would see the “options for change” defence review further slash the armed forces to ribbons and make it impossible for Britain to prosecute a war outside its shores without the aid of NATO allies.

Of all the “Cold War Warriors” we’ve shown in *Airsoft Action*, the uniforms and accoutrements of the British Tommy has perhaps been the most diverse. It’s for this reason that collecting a cold war British impression is perhaps the most fun and the most versatile. The British Army tended to keep items of equipment in service for a long time and so once you’ve got one loadout together, it’s usually just a case of swapping a few items out for more suitable replacement and you’re instantly able to create a new look!



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# IRONSIGHT: FROM THE ASHES

**KELLY “FEMME FATALE” HARDWICK REPORTS FROM A SITE THAT JUST OVER A YEAR AGO SUFFERED A CATASTROPHIC FIRE BUT, LIKE THE LEGENDARY PHOENIX, HAS RISEN FROM THE ASHES**

ON THE 19TH OF SEPTEMBER 2014 at 1pm, the owner of Ironsight Paintball Lasertag and Airsoft, Paul Dunford, received an alarming phone call informing him that the site owned by himself and his wife Lorraine was on fire. At the time the couple had a very secure storage area in which they stored their rental Airsoft guns, Laser Tag guns and general equipment, which was worth an estimated £95,000, located in the main

building at the site. During the fire the main building was destroyed along with their equipment, causing hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage. Luckily the gaming zone was largely untouched. The Fire Investigation Unit confirmed the fire was started by a very unlucky lightning strike. Just over a year later I decided to visit the site to see the progress they have made.

Ironsight Paintball,

Lasertag and Airsoft is an Urban Airsoft site located in Andover, Hampshire, is owned by Paul and Lorraine and managed by Mark Stevenson. Ironsight was offered to the couple in 2013 and they were eager to restart their Airsoft business from their previous site, so took the plunge. They took to social media

and thanks to their loyal customer base from their previous site, Paul started to run a few games and although business was slow at the beginning, his customers enjoyed it and with Paul's amazing "The customers' happiness always comes first" attitude, their venture started to work. They believe their food is one of the best in the country (and I have to agree!) Lorraine and Paul are very proud of their site and its 5 star Food and hygiene rating!

The site itself is Urban and mixes the best of CQB and outdoor gameplay. The indoor zones are made up of a central corridor that connects different themed rooms with impressive structures, such as an Aztec pyramid, a Graffiti room with tunnels and multiple levels, a Train room and a Slaughter House that has sacrificial alters and an Egyptian pyramid. The rooms have plenty of hiding places and tunnels to flank the enemy and as the site has outdoors and indoor zones, it can accommodate a range of guns from snipers for those longshots, to pistols for close CQB action.

So what damage was caused by the fire and how long has it taken the team to rebuild?

The damage inside saw the destruction of the main building and was so intense that all the site had left was two brooms, a fake plant and their riot shields! All of their equipment was destroyed, including their catering unit, kitchen and gameplay equipment. Paul describes it as "head in your hands stuff, watching all that you have worked for go up in smoke".

The staff are still rebuilding over a year on and the gaming







area has increased in size since the fire, which is good news for players. During the blaze the site's electrics were destroyed and they were running on generators for months, however they made it work. It was roughly 5 months since the fire that their safe zone was fully rebuilt, prior to that the old archery range was utilised so there was still an indoor safe zone. Currently they are building a new Laser Tag reception and Café, which I got the pleasure to see on my tour of the site with their head marshal Liam Sibley. Once completed this will hopefully free up the existing safe zone and reception purely for airsoft use only.

One thing I was interested to find out was, how did the fire affect Paul and his staff? Paul told us that it didn't affect the airsoft staff too much, although he feels without Lorraine, Mark (Site Manager) and Sam (Airsoft manager at the time), Ironsight would have been a short-lived affair. A few members of their staff, including Site Manager Mark and Marshal Dean, came in to work for free to help with the site and it's clear to see Paul is very grateful for their help. Instead of letting the fire dampen their spirits though, they opened up the site just two days later for Airsoft - they did have to cancel all of the Laser Tag events due to having no equipment, meaning thousands of pounds was lost in revenue! Soldiering on, the carpark became the safe zone that weekend and although they couldn't offer any sundries or food as the shop was destroyed in the fire, it was game on!

As the news broke, their players, friends and family rallied together to show their support in different ways, from lending tools to helping with the rebuilding and as their insurance took

a while to come through, any help was much appreciated. As it turns out, the fire didn't stop Airsoft at Ironsight and appears to have helped in a way.

So what are Ironsight's plans for the future?

They currently run Wednesday evening games as the site is flood-lit, which they plan to develop. They are a technically advanced site and use a lot of remote pyrotechnics, as well as objective game boxes which are built by their electronics guru, Adam Beach. They have also used Drones and Trucks, trip wires and lots of other little gaming extras which they plan to keep adding to. Paul and his team are still pushing forward

**"THE DAMAGE INSIDE SAW THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MAIN BUILDING AND WAS SO INTENSE THAT ALL THE SITE HAD LEFT WAS TWO BROOMS, A FAKE PLANT AND THEIR RIOT SHIELDS!"**

with the site development in the gaming areas and they are always trying to change and add games to add variety. The site is currently about 60% of where Paul wants it to be but Rome wasn't built in day - or a year! They plan to do some MilSim type events but with the site being rebuilt, it has hindered their plans a little.

Paul would like to thank all their friends, family and players for their unwavering support over the last year and we at *Airsoft Action* wish Paul and Lorraine all the best with their site.

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# LEADING FROM THE FRONT

**THE TEAM LEADER WILL USUALLY DECIDE THE SQUAD'S TACTICS IN THE FIELD AND MAY EVEN HAVE DECIDED WHAT EVENTS YOU'RE EVEN PLAYING AT. IT'S A LOT OF RESPONSIBILITY AND IT'S HARD TO BALANCE... SO GADGE ASKS "CAN YOU DO IT?"**

WHILE MANY OF THE SUGGESTIONS for the erstwhile Team Leader in this article seem like "common sense" or "stating the obvious", it's regrettable that they are actually far from obvious and I've lost track of the amount of events I've been at where I've seen bad Team Leaders forget some of these fundamental skills and attitudes; at best annoying their team or their opponents and at worst causing schisms in their squad that are hard to heal.

Without a shadow of a doubt the hardest role in any team is that of the Team Leader and it's hard for one reason; you don't really have anything to fall back on other than your own personality.





In military units, or even work environments, even the most unpopular Team Leader or boss usually has the authority and sanctions of an organisation behind them. If they come up with a bad plan you still have to do it or face a court martial or the sack. Likewise if you don't like them or their leadership style... tough! You're stuck with it until you can get promoted above them.

Most airsoft team leaders are one of two types: Either self-appointed, or elected by a democratic vote (although a minority are "reluctant leaders" because nobody else will do it!). Most often the team leader is the person who first came up with the idea of having a team, they usually have the charisma or even just the strength of personality to bind a group of individuals together under a common banner. It's important, however, not to confuse "strong personality" with "bossy", as any team led by someone who thinks they are the next "Storming Norman" is usually quite short-lived. Often the best type of teams elect their team leader or rotate the role among the members, especially if one team mate's strengths are in, say, CQB and you're about to play on an urban site.

However you decide who is the Squad Leader, it really helps if they have some understanding of "small unit tactics". You don't have to have been in the Army/Cadets/TA (but it can help), you just have to understand the concepts of fire and movement, flanking attacks and have the ability to eye up a skirmish field and be able to see suitable cover for ambushes, likely enemy approach routes and, most importantly, spot impassable or very difficult routes very quickly.

## LEARN TO DELEGATE

In larger teams (more than six or seven of you) it's usually a good idea to have an "Assistant Team Leader" to take control of any elements of the team you need to split up. The Assistant Team Leader needs most of the qualities the Team Leader requires and should be able to step up to the role if the Team Leader is taken out. While most players have their own PRR coms these days, if you happen to be in a team where you only have a few radios it's probably best if they are given to the



based on your appraisal of the ground (with or without a map) and you've got the tactical "smarts" not to send your mates blundering into an ambush, so what next?

## TAKING THE TEAM "OFF SITE"

What many people don't think about when founding or leading a team, is that it's important to have some team activity "off site", as much as on the skirmish field. All teams need some form of identity as we discussed last issue. It could be as simple as a name, a team camo or a patch but what really binds a team together is friendship (in the absence of "duty" that would bind a real world military unit together). Take the time to arrange the odd "non-airsoft" event for your team, it could be just going to the Pub, or something more in-depth like a day trip to an airsoft retailer. Set up a Facebook page to discuss previous games and plans for the new ones

or, better still, your own website and forum; there is nothing better than being able to chat about upcoming games with your teammates in between bouts and a team spirit can quickly evolve from lots of light hearted communication online. As Team Leader a lot of people will see YOU as the focus of the team but don't fall into the trap of thinking you're the most important, or you might see your "loyal" teammates jumping ship if you develop too much of an ego!

If you're all local to each other, it's a great idea to see if your local site will let you use the other end of the site on a skirmish day for team training. You can "dry run" section attacks against known defences, or even "live fire" by detaching two or three of your squad to represent a tricky obstacle, let's say an LMG team in a bunker or a well-concealed sniper in the treeline. Team training and practice not only lets you hone your skills in specific areas but it also helps you get to know each other as individuals - and fosters that most important bond of trust and friendship.

On mission, a good Team Leader will always take suggestions from the team. If you've got time before "game on", after laying out your strategy you should always ask if anyone has a better idea or any suggestions or perhaps can see a flaw. Remember you don't have the "authority" of a real NCO or officer, so rather than "ordering" your mates to do a task, try and phrase it as a request; for example "Dave, could

**"AS TEAM LEADER A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL SEE YOU AS THE FOCUS OF THE TEAM BUT DON'T FALL INTO THE TRAP OF THINKING YOU'RE THE MOST IMPORTANT, OR YOU MIGHT SEE YOUR "LOYAL" TEAMMATES JUMPING SHIP IF YOU DEVELOP TOO MUCH OF AN EGO!"**

Team Leader, the Assistant Team Leader and the recce team or sniper (more about the last two next issues).

Most of the time your team will be playing at open days on your local site (or perhaps nearby ones) and so finding your way around is never much of a problem, for bigger events though it's essential your Team Leader has at least a basic grasp of map-reading.

## THE ART OF NOT GETTING LOST

Map-reading is a useful skill for any airsofter, as you never know when you might need it but for the Team Leader it's especially useful. In many big weekend events I've played, Team Leaders are often given a map with key features and targets marked upon it. Often these games are played on much bigger sites and being able to orientate yourself on a map is a useful skill. As with reading the terrain by sight it's quite handy if you can look at a map of an area and visualise exactly what you should see when you arrive there. I've seen more than one group of players come unstuck when the "direct route" leads them through a swamp, or up a heart-attack-inducing hill that could have been avoided with a little bit of map and compass work and some "contouring".

So let's assume you have some of these basic skills, you're outgoing enough to get people motivated but not so gobby you'll annoy them. You're able to make decent decisions





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you check out that fuel dump?" Be reasonable and remember that your team are paying to be there too and might not really want to spend all day "observing the enemy HQ" if they have come for a firefight. Play to your team's strengths and never force people into a game role they have no interest in or can't do. A reluctant sniper or scout will constantly let you down by seeking "trigger time", rather than staying on task.

With "trigger time" in mind it's also worth thinking about

your own loadout as Squad Leader. Unless for scenario or historical loadout reasons you're forced to use a certain aeg or kit, it's probably best if you kit yourself out in the same way as your squad's riflemen. The advantages of doing this are twofold...

Most importantly you can function in the field as a reserve rifleman (but not so far up front you're a prime target), you should equip yourself with a good "all-rounder" aeg and with a fairly "light" loadout, as you may need to redeploy at speed to help out part of your team across the field. The other advantage to equipping yourself like your rifle-wielding squad mates, is that you present a less obvious target. Knocking out a Team Leader is often a massive blow to a squad, particularly if they have in-game abilities, so don't make it easy for the enemy.

Most of the above advice is aimed at the casual skirmish team so it's probably worth putting in a few words about the role of Squad Leader in a MilSim or "historical game" situation.

In a MilSim, or FilmSim, you're playing a role so a lot of the "niceties" of giving orders can be dispensed with. People have paid good money to be immersed in a fantasy world and so barking out orders rather than asking nicely isn't too rude! Likewise if you're going to play in these sorts of games it's a good idea to read up on historical tactics, language and techniques of the time. While many players will be playing "regular airsoft with a theme", for a lot of players knowing the terminology, hand signals, proper voice procedure and tactics is essential. You won't hurt yourself by giving it a go and on the whole you'll improve the whole event by making the game world more "believable".

So there you go, some simple and practical advice on how to direct your team and stay in control of it (and hopefully liked as well) throughout the game. Some of it may seem like a lot of hassle... after all, who wants to learn to map read eh? Well you know if you're taking on the role you need to embrace the responsibilities, anyone can lead a team to defeat but it takes skill to forge a team of winners.

Next month: The Scout Sniper







# SNUG

# IN THE SAFE ZONE

**AS THE MONTHS  
TURN WETTER  
AND COLDER,  
JERRY NOONE  
SAYS IT'S TIME TO  
CHECK OUT GEAR  
SPECIFICALLY FOR  
KEEPING SNUG  
IN THE SAFE  
ZONE WHEN THE  
TEMPERATURE  
PLUMMETS AND  
THE SLEET AND  
SNOW DRIVE IN!**

EARLIER IN THE YEAR I TOOK a look at how to set up a clothing system that will allow you to stay warm, dry and comfortable during a day of skirmishing but as the days grow shorter, darker and colder I'm going to look at one very specific item that every airsofters should own and that's a warm, insulated jacket for use in the Safe Zone.

I actually feel that this is a crucial piece of gear to own for two main reasons. Firstly, after a hard morning's skirmish you're going to have built up a head of steam but when you're out on a basic site with no heated Safe Zone (in many cases you'll be operating from the back of the car!) it's very, very easy to chill down quickly when you stop for lunch. This leads to quick discomfort and on a cold, snowy winter's day I've seen many players leave at lunchtime as they've become too chilled to continue.

Secondly, sadly in the UK it's often not the cold, pretty white stuff falling from the sky that we need to contend with but rain and sleet; if you've ever stood in an exposed Safe Zone with horizontal sleet driving in, you'll totally get why I find an insulated jacket to be an indispensable bit of kit!

In the winter months if you really need to push up the insulation levels of your mid-layer then it's seriously worth considering some form of lightweight lofted garment. Once upon a time everyone would have been saying "get a down jacket" and in certain conditions I'd thoroughly agree with that. These days though I pretty much always go for a synthetic fill, rather than down; synthetics retain a high percentage of their insulative properties even when wet, whereas when down gets wet it will stay wet and will actually try to use your own core body heat to dry itself - resulting in you being even colder!

Another benefit of a synthetic fill is that you can compress it and leave it compressed for extended periods of time without causing any damage to its structure. Most of the jackets will come with a compression or "Stuff" sac which can be used to minimise its size, making it easier to store and carry with you.

Hypothermia is not something to be taken lightly and let's face it, you really don't want to be "that guy" who causes



a problem for everyone due to lack of forethought and preparation. I know, I really do, that you could easily look at this and say that an insulated jacket is just another piece of kit to buy; another expensive item of clothing that won't get used that much. In fact once you own such a garment I think you'll be shocked actually how much you do use it!

All the "big names" out there will offer one, if not more insulated jackets in their clothing range and depending on whether you are "loaded or unloaded" then shopping around will get you something in your price range. Although camouflage insulated jackets are available, think about where you'll be wearing it. If you buy a simple block colour rather than camo then you're also going to end up with something you can wear every day, which makes it even better value for money.

With all that said here are my "six of the best" for the Safe Zone; keep warm, keep switched on, and above all else, keep playing airsoft and enjoy your winter games!

### Snugpak SJ9 Jacket (£139.95)

[www.snugpak.com/military](http://www.snugpak.com/military)

Snugpak, the leading British sleeping bag manufacturer, has built upon the success of its best known insulated jacket, the Softie, to bring an inspired new innovation to its clothing collection. The new generation of insulated jackets from Snugpak are British made in the company's factory in West Yorkshire and are manufactured using its exclusive Softie Premier insulation.

The warmest jacket in the collection is the SJ9, which uses Softie 9 Insulation. It features a full time insulated hood, which can be rolled down and secured in place when not in use and Snugpak's Softie® Premier insulation for ultimate warmth, making it ideal for extreme winter conditions or when stationary for long periods of time. Hem draw cords mean you can snug it in to retain warmth, elasticated cuffs form a great seal when wearing gloves and there are two deep



hand warmer pockets as well. Down the sides of the jacket is a unique panel of baffles which holds the insulation exactly where it's needed; Snugpak have obviously looked to their sleeping bag range and taken inspiration from there, and it works very well indeed.

The SJ9 is available in Olive, Military Black, MultiCam and A-TACS camo and features Velcro on the arms for unit or morale patches. I've been really pleased to have this model on test and it's fast proving to be a "keeper". Over the winter months last year I was able to try it in various conditions and, especially when the temperature plummeted, it really performed! If you're looking for a really great winter jacket that is absolutely perfect for wear in the Safe Zone then I'd urge you to take a really close look at the SJ9 as it comes with my thorough recommendation.

### Snugpak MML6 Softie Smock (£199.95)

[www.snugpak.com/military](http://www.snugpak.com/military)

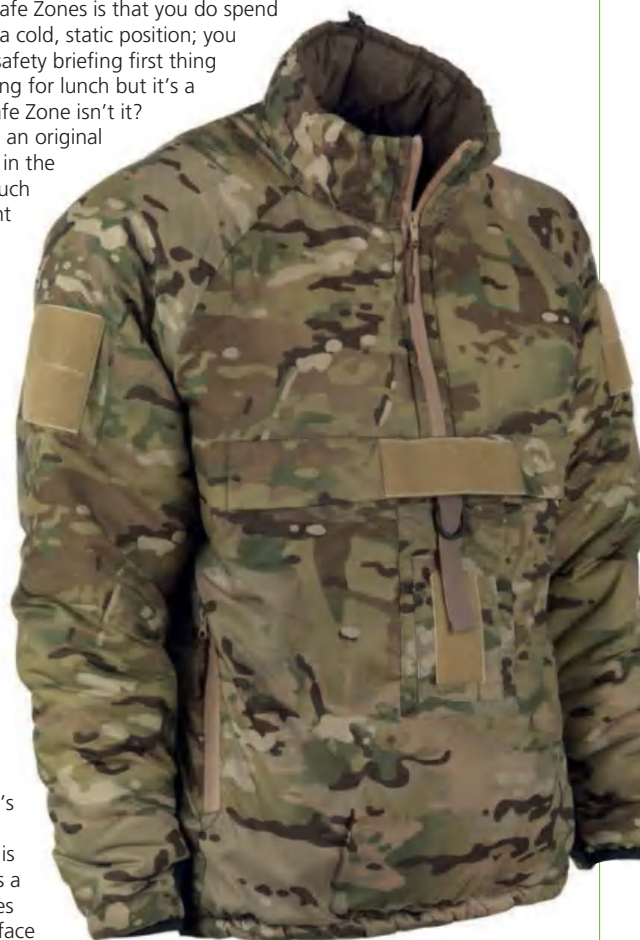
One of the things with Safe Zones is that you do spend a fair amount of time in a cold, static position; you might be attending the safety briefing first thing in the morning or breaking for lunch but it's a rarity to find a heated Safe Zone isn't it? For years I've always had an original Snugpak "Softie" jacket in the back of the car for just such times, for when you want a bit of instant warmth.

Now Snugpak have really upped the ante though, taking things to an entirely new level! Developed by Snugpak with input from professional navigators, mountain leaders, climbing instructors, meteorological staff and military personnel, the new functional Military Mountain Leader Smock has been created to support the user in a diverse range of operational environments, especially when exposed to extreme cold weather.

As a part of Snugpak's new "VENTURE" range the MML6 Softie Smock is the flagship garment. It's a tri-layer garment and uses both Paratex Micro as a face fabric and an internal Softie Premier fill, encapsulated with

a Paratex Light lining. Designed to provide excellent thermal protection against the cold, the MML6 is rated -5C to -10C; it also provides a high degree of wind protection. The MML6 Softie Smock is lighter than normal expedition-style jackets and uses water resistant YKK zips, making it ideal when size and weight need to be kept to an absolute minimum. It is ideally worn with a variety of base layers, such as the Snugpak 2nd Skinz Coolmax base layer, to move moisture away from the skin, keeping you dry and regulating core temperature in extremes of cold.

The quick drying, Paratex Micro 100% nylon material has a Durable Water Repellent (DWR) finish. Water repellency can be maintained with a cool tumble dry after washing and periodic re-treatment with suitable after care products, such as Nikwax





and Grangers. The MML6 Softie Smock will keep you dry in a short, light shower, giving you time to find a safe place to stop and put on more effective waterproof layers. The MML6 Softie Smock can also be worn under waterproof membrane hard shells in severe weather, still allowing easy access to your essential equipment.

Whilst not exactly cheap at £199.95 the MML6 Softie Smock should be viewed as a long term investment, especially if you act as a Marshal as well as a player; whilst skirmishers can easily head back inside to warm up a Marshal needs to be out onsite at all times that a game is in progress. The MML6 easily lets you do this so in my mind is an invaluable addition to your kit locker.

**“SYNTHETICS RETAIN A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF THEIR INSULATIVE PROPERTIES EVEN WHEN WET, WHEREAS WHEN DOWN GETS WET IT WILL STAY WET AND WILL ACTUALLY TRY TO USE YOUR OWN CORE BODY HEAT TO DRY ITSELF - RESULTING IN YOU BEING EVEN COLDER!”**

### Wild Things Tactical Low Loft Jacket (£139.95)

[www.tactical-kit.co.uk](http://www.tactical-kit.co.uk)

US manufacturer Wild Things Tactical (WTT) really understand layering systems; working with the ultimate in breathable technologies they understand the “heat dump” and this was taken into account with their system from the word go. Enter stage right the WTT Low Loft Jacket!

For many moons in winter climbing circles it's been quite the norm to carry what is known as a “belay vest or jacket” in the top of your ruc. Once upon a time this would have been just a simple down vest but as technologies have moved on, most garments of this type make use of a synthetic fill which retains insulative properties even

when wet. The idea is a simple one; when you're climbing you are kicking out serious amounts of moisture (sweat) and heat so you need something über breathable. When



you stop, set your stance and prepare to belay for your partner you're going to be immobile and body heat will dissipate fast. By throwing on an insulating garment over everything else you retain warmth in your system, which in turn lets you stay switched on and alert.

In the Wild Things Tactical Low Loft the body of the jacket is made of 70 denier textured nylon fabric, keeping the weight of the garment down without reducing protection from the elements. The nylon rip stop lining is quilted to 2oz PrimaLoft synthetic insulation, keeping you warm without the bulk. Hand warmer pockets are sewn directly into the seam for a clean-finished look. It also features abrasion resistant panels from the elbow to the cuff; these are extremely durable with plenty of stretch and this styling will allow you to get down on your elbows frequently without wearing through the sleeve. Bicep pockets have 7 zippers for secure storage. The shoulder seams are eliminated to reduce chafing, and the dropped tail covers the back even when kneeling. The back portion of the jackets hem is elasticated to enhance fit and to prevent core-chilling wind from coming up through the hem.

Weighing in at a meagre 510g/18oz the Low Loft is really not going to add a huge amount to a winter load and it crushes down small so as not to take up space in the top of your ruc. Its light weight might make you think it's not going to give you the insulation you need but the PrimaLoft is so effective you'll be amazed at how warm this jacket gets. Add this over the top of your hard-shell and gear (ensure you buy a size large enough to do this!) when you come to rest in cold conditions and you're going to stay more comfortable and therefore more alert. For this reason alone the WTT Low Loft Jacket gets my complete recommendation!

### Carinthia MIG 2.0 Jacket (£220.00)

[www.speq-se.com](http://www.speq-se.com)

When it comes to cold weather performance one brand that's caught my eye over the past couple of years (but that I've not had a chance to try until recently) is Carinthia. For over 60 years Carinthia, a trademark of the Gold Eck Textile Corporation, has devoted itself to insulation technology using both natural as well as synthetic fibres, for use in most extreme conditions. For the last 25 years, they have concentrated on the development of Technical Polyester Insulation for demanding conditions. Their aim? To achieve maximum efficiency with an optimal warmth to weight ratio for specialist end users.

If you're at all interested in performance clothing and gear then you'll probably be no stranger to the Carinthia brand; at shows I always make a point of stopping at their stand to check out their latest offerings and I'm rarely disappointed! Thanks to [www.speq-se.com](http://www.speq-se.com) Carinthia products are now a whole lot easier to get hold of in the UK. The G-LOFT MIG (Medium Insulation Garment) 2.0 Jacket is the one I've been testing this year, a real “flagship” garment that offers really superb performance.

The MIG features a fixed lined hood with elastic draw-cords, adjustable in two directions, a two-way front zipper (all outside zippers are water-repellent) and elasticated cuffs. There are two spacious lined and insulated front pockets and one inner pocket, two pockets on the upper sleeves with a velcro patch for insignia and one pocket on the lower sleeve. The jacket also has arm pit zips for ventilation.

This jacket is a cracker; it's multifunctional but not overly bulky (650g in size M). The outer shell fabric is the excellent Gore Windstopper, with the G-LOFT insulation inside which maintains 85% of its warmth even when wet!







## Helikon-Tex Level 7 Jacket (£139.00)

[www.military1st.co.uk](http://www.military1st.co.uk)

Helikon-Tex are well known for providing solid, well priced garments and being Polish they know just a little about cold weather performance! The new Level 7 model is a lightweight winter jacket which provides insulation and protection against frost, wind and light rain. Washable Climashield Apex fill material prevents heat loss, enhances moisture transfer from the body and provides thermal insulation and ultimate warmth. Two chest pockets are lined with fleece to provide protection from extreme cold weather. The hood can be easily adjusted without removing hands from the chest pockets via two drawstrings located there.

The Level 7 Jacket features the two large external chest pockets, lined with fleece, with inner sleeve pockets, D-rings with elastic straps, YKK zippers and hood drawstrings. Two additional interior bellows pockets made of elasticated mesh are ideal for drying damp gloves and keeping water bottles from freezing on snow days. There is a fully adjustable helmet compatible hood, hidden inside the collar with a two-way zip and ergonomic pull-tabs and both the inner side of the hood and the collar are lined with soft fleece.

There is a bottom drawstring for cinching everything in snugly and velcro adjustable cuffs prevent heat loss in that area. A well thought-out and neatly designed thermal strip along the two-way front YKK zipper provides better insulation from the cold and the jacket is rounded out with an upper sleeve velcro panel on each arm.

As with all things Helikon-Tex, this is a super jacket that has all the features you'll ever need along with great cold, wet-weather performance. It's also very well priced which means you get a lot of "bang for your buck" and these reasons alone earn it a place in our recommendations!

## Arc'teryx Atom LT Jacket (£205.00)

[www.hueys.co.uk](http://www.hueys.co.uk)

Arc'teryx are often viewed as a "Gucci" brand and deservedly so because everything they create, for either the civilian or military markets, benefits from the very best in terms of design, materials and construction and the Atom LT jacket is no exception! It's an exceptionally lightweight insulated mid layer that retains core warmth by blocking wind and trapping warm air next to the body and can also function as a wind resistant outer layer. An insulated hood adjusts to securely fit the head and face and this is designed to follow side to side motion without obscuring peripheral vision. Media ports inside the hand pockets allow for internal routing of communication cables. When worn under personal protection equipment, comfortable side panels of breathable, stretch fabric prevent overheating and provide ease of movement.

The Atom LT features Coreloft™ insulation which has a very high warmth-to-weight ratio and resists compacting, Polartec® Power Stretch® with Hardface® technology side panels which are highly breathable and have excellent stretch mobility. The insulated hood has a single pull adjuster and articulation in the shoulders and elbows provides room for a full range of unrestricted motion. There are two large hand pockets with media ports to allow for internal routing of communications cables and one internal chest pocket. A vertically routed hem draw cord minimizes interference with a duty or battle belt.

This is probably the most minimalist of the garments I've chosen but although it is indeed very light and packable, it is really superbly warm! This is the choice of our dearly beloved "tactical athlete" so if you're a fast mover then this is the one for you!





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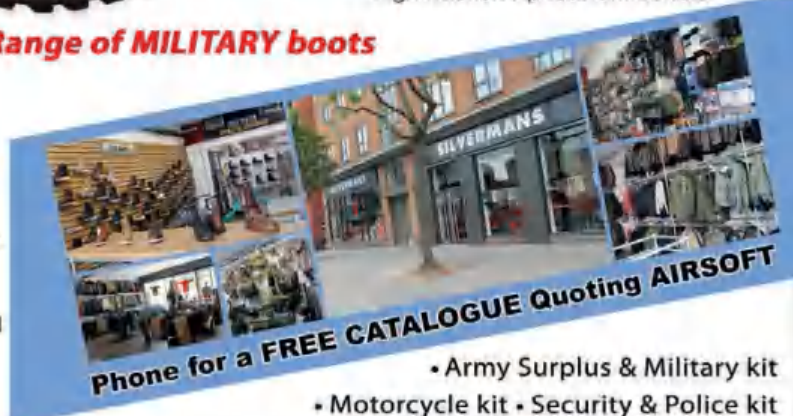
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# COUNTER-TERRORIST TEAM TRAINING

**PAUL YELLAND REPORTS FROM AN A SQUADRON TRAINING COURSE, WHERE EX-SAS SOLDIER, BOB PODESTA, SHARED SOME OF THE TRAINING TECHNIQUES USED BY COUNTER-TERRORIST TEAMS**

EVER SINCE I BECAME AWARE of A Squadron back in early 2014, I have been keeping the company on my radar – purely because I instantly recognised that there was something different and exciting about what was being offered. The company is run by Faith Cowling and SAS legend Bob Podesta MID and offers a selection of courses based on real Special Forces training. I was lucky enough to be invited to take part in A Squadron's "Operation Intradon" in November last year and, since then, I have been keen to attend some of the A Squadron courses. So, when I saw a Counter Terrorist Team Training (CTT1) Pistol course being advertised by A Squadron, I decided to sign up...

The rendezvous for the course was at a remote farm complex somewhere near Hereford. Now, with the city of Hereford having strong links with the Special Air Service (SAS),

the course subject themed on basic counter terrorist skills and the course instructor a former member of the SAS, I started to feel quite apprehensive about what I was letting myself in for. As I pulled up into the farm complex on the sunny Saturday morning, I noticed that the other course participants had already arrived and were all looking keen to get stuck into whatever was in store for us. Faith came over and greeted me as I was getting out of my car in a warm and friendly manner, which certainly helped to calm my nerves. I was directed to the small building which was home to the kettle and biscuits and once everybody had arrived we were all taken into another farm building, where the upstairs was to be the lecture room and firing range.

Now, I have been sworn to secrecy regarding the actual course content but what I can say, is that from the start the course was extremely professional. The course topic, "CTT1 Pistol", was a subject which Bob used to teach during his military service in the SAS, so the information that we were being taught was coming direct from THE person who knows best. The participants attending the course had all come from different backgrounds and each had varying levels of airsofting experience. But one thing that we did all share was an enthusiasm to learn some techniques from Bob.

After receiving a thorough introduction and safety brief given by Faith and Bob, we were all taken into another room which was the training area and firing range. Down range there were ten figure 11 targets placed on stands – one target for each student – but it quickly became obvious that it was going to be some time before we were going to "live fire". Without giving away any course secrets, Bob made it quite clear from the start that it was the little skills and drills that made up a complete and highly proficient soldier, such as those who are serving in Special Forces. Bob went on to demonstrate some pistol drills to us in exactly the same manner as he used to instruct whilst serving in the regiment. After each demonstration, we all had a chance to practice the drills. I have





to say that Bob's method of instruction is second to none. The demonstrations were clear to understand and if any of the students were having difficulty with a particular drill, Bob was more than ready to step in and help.

To start off with, all of the techniques which we had been practicing seemed very alien but within a few hours of intense drills and rehearsals, things started to fall into place with all of the movements and positions now feeling more natural. Although still making the occasional mistake, I started to feel more confident in the execution of the drills and as a group, we all started to move in unison.

As the course went on, the time came for "live firing".

The main emphasis up until this point had been safety and we were now all being trusted to carry out what we had been taught in a competent manner. There is a considerable amount of movement and footwork involved in the CTT1 course and, for some reason, as soon I was carrying out the drills with a loaded pistol, my nerves started to get the better of me. I found that I really had to concentrate to get my rounds on target and Bob was being quite specific in where the shots should be landing – in the centre bull.

The first distance we had to fire from was no further than one metre away from the figure 11 target and although it sounds easy, I can assure you it was not. I did manage to get all of my rounds inside the centre bull of the target but not without some serious concentration. As the shooting distances were increased, my groupings widened to land within the outer bull. I found myself rushing in a period of over confidence and, as a result, adopting a less than perfect firing position which was showing through my round placements. I decided to take a few deep breaths and relax. I needed to slow things down and work on my technique, not speed, at this early stage. I recalled what Bob had showed us earlier that day and went back to basics for another attempt. From the draw of the pistol from my holster to the squeeze of the trigger – it all felt calmer and more controlled, all thanks to Bob's brilliant tuition that morning.

As the training intensified and we were given more techniques to learn, I felt that something had just clicked. It was all starting to make sense now. I understand from Bob that the entire CTT1 pistol course lasts for two weeks in the Regiment but after just a few hours, I started to feel that I had learned some valuable skills. It was just a shame that the course

**"WITH THE CITY OF HEREFORD HAVING STRONG LINKS WITH THE SPECIAL AIR SERVICE (SAS), THE COURSE SUBJECT THEMED ON BASIC COUNTER TERRORIST SKILLS AND THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR A FORMER MEMBER OF THE SAS, I STARTED TO FEEL QUITE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WHAT I WAS LETTING MYSELF IN FOR."**

was only for one day, as I would have jumped at the chance to continue the training for a fortnight!

During the afternoon, the course topics became what can only be described as "physical" and Bob had the group carrying out moves that I myself had no idea that I could still physically do. But as with all the other previous tasks, Bob installed us all with self-confidence and coached everybody through.

As the course came to a close, all of the weapons were made safe and it was a chance for some photographs to be taken and certificates to be presented. The group had bonded well and as everyone packed away their kit, there was a positive vibe and a sense that the course had been enjoyed by all. Both Faith and Bob had done a great job with the course and as I left, Bob gave me these final words of advice: "Keep practicing what you have learnt", which is what I most definitely intend to do.

I can thoroughly recommend this course to anybody interested in advancing their pistol skills. The course costs £110.00 and if you have attended a previous A Squadron course you will qualify for a £10.00 discount. To recertify on any of their courses will cost just £50.00 and it really is worth keeping up the skills which you have been taught, because what you learn on an A Squadron course is quite unique.

**For more information on upcoming courses, head over to A Squadron's website ([www.a-sqn.com](http://www.a-sqn.com)) or their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ASquadron>**





ANGELO DV HEADS OFF TO  
YORKSHIRE, TO CHECK OUT PATROL  
BASE'S NEW OUTDOOR SITE

# THE PROVING GROUNDS

THE PROVING GROUNDS IS A relatively new airsoft site, based at the York Paintball venue located in Selby near York. The site is run by the very well-known airsoft retailer, Patrol Base, who are based out of Huddersfield and due to the huge success of their CQB site Halo Mill, decided to venture into holding outdoor skirmishes. With this in mind I assembled six of the lads from Team Rhino and my boy and we decided to give it a go.

On arrival at the site we had plenty of places to park in the more than ample car park then a very short walk to the

site entrance. At the entrance was the signing in desk that was being manned by Chris from Patrol Base, with his usual friendly and welcoming smile. So signed in, disclaimer filled out and arm band put on and it was time to set up. We were directed to the ready area with the usual picnic table set up and partition walls to keep the warring factions apart (joking). There was loads of room to get yourself sorted, so all good in this department.

So mags bombed up and kit ready and it was off to get the guns checked on the chrono. Very clear instructions from the marshal at the chrono regarding limits and BBs in my mag. I have to say the chrono was definitely the most awesome one I've ever seen, I like the fact that the marshal did the firing at the chrono station too. This was all good with no dramas.

Next we were called to a central part in the ready area for the safety briefing. The briefing was delivered in a very professional and concise way and covered all the necessary points. So we then split into two teams and the game briefing began and this is where the way they run their game days is different to any skirmish days we've played before.

Basically, it was a skirmish that was being run like a MilSim scenario, it started at 10am and finished at 4pm with no enforced breaks. This meant you could drop out and rejoin at any point during the day with the objectives rolling on during the day. So we were issued with our medic arm bands and a map of the site with the objectives printed on the reverse. On a previous visit the maps we were given were very poor copies and most of the objectives on the rear were too faded to read but I'm happy to say they clearly listened to the feedback and the ones we were issued this time were spot on. Another MilSim based element added to the game play was that the regen zones would swap around every half an hour. Now in theory this is a great idea, as it gives you the opportunity to get in behind the enemy and opportunities for ambush are endless. The problem was on our previous visit this wasn't administered in a clear way and when the zones were ready to swap there was just a shout from the marshals and that was it. But I am happy to say this also has been vastly improved with a much clearer indication as to when the regen areas were swapping (well done guys!). So maybe a note to other site operators; listen to feedback from your customers.







### GAMEPLAY

The game play scenarios were very straight forward; capture an area or building and hold it for a set amount of time then move onto the next one where you would win various bonus points. These were all listed on the back of the map that we could now read, fortunately the marshals were more than happy to tell us what the next objective was. Points were added or deducted for players who had been shot twice when they returned to regen.

Everything ran very smoothly and the objectives were nice and simple but, more importantly, very achievable. I often see and hear players grumbling when they are faced with an objective that is simply not possible, it can be quite disheartening. The collection of laptops and transporting them to another part of the site or building made for good team play. This site also has the biggest bridge I've ever seen on any site, it looks like something out of "Jurassic Park" or "King Kong". Attacking and defending that was a load of fun! One good thing was the site operators and the marshals really mixed it up with some long range games and ones that were right on your toes, something I really liked.



### SUMMARY

This is a great site that is operated by an organisation who have been running a very successful CQB arena and Airsoft shop for many years, so they know what it takes to run this kind of enterprise. Now I'm going to be pragmatic about this and say that, in my opinion, my first visit to this site was ruined by a group of players who it seems were out to spoil things for other players and the site operators. I am very happy to say that there was a massive improvement with every point raised being addressed.

We had a very good day, well done.

**"THIS SITE ALSO HAS THE BIGGEST BRIDGE I'VE EVER SEEN ON ANY SITE, IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF 'JURASSIC PARK' OR 'KING KONG'. ATTACKING AND DEFENDING THAT WAS A LOAD OF FUN!"**



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# BB FIELD TEST

## TEAM RHINO'S ANGELO DV CHECKS OUT THE QUALITY OF A SELECTION OF BBS

AFTER READING AND HEARING lots of negative comments recently about poor quality BBs and the varying prices of products, I decided to investigate further. I approached various BB manufacturers and resellers and asked them if they would like their products to be compared to others on the market in a field test. Some agreed without hesitation, whilst others were less forthcoming and declined to be included in the testing.

So within ten or so days I had products from G&G (kindly supplied by Marek at Airsoft Zone) in weights 0.25g and 0.28g, plus Monkey Balls, kindly supplied by Chris at Airsoft Essentials/BBs Direct, in weights 0.2g & 0.25g. We also had some Blaster 0.25g and a later entry to the show was the new "RAIN" series of BBs from BO Dynamics.

Myself and most of the lads from Team Rhino were playing an event at the Skirmish CQB Wentworth site, so I thought this would

be a good time to perform the test comparison. So I handed out relevant magazines with the different products loaded and asked the boys to run with them and then I would give them a different brand to try. All samples were run in various rifles with inner barrels varying from 6.08 to 6.01.

This is what we found under playing conditions...

### G&G

The appearance and packaging of these BBs was exceptional, great solid re-sealable bag that actually reseals and stands up even when almost empty. The BBs themselves were highly polished and even looking at them through a loupe, the consistency appeared very close. The feedback I got back from the boys was that these BBs were incredibly consistent, with no jams or mis-feeds whatsoever. They were very popular and since the test I have been reliably informed that these are the most popular BBs used in Europe - and I can see why.

### MONKEY BALLS

These were another bagged product (although in a very flimsy bag) that were totally different to any other BBs I think I've ever seen - the

0.25g had a totally matt finish to them which I have never seen before. Now if I put my "physics boffin" hat on, this tells me a couple of things. First of all, you will need to apply less hop as the rubber will grip them much easier but the trade off will be they will have more drag when travelling through the air. The feedback from the guys was there were a few mis-feeds in one MP5 and my PMAGS didn't like them at all.

But overall the product was very consistent and very well priced.

### BO DYNAMICS

Now as I mentioned earlier these were a late comer to the test and I was immediately impressed with the packaging. They have utilised the easy packing of a bag but added a bottle spout with cap for easy pouring. I liked this... a lot! The appearance was also very good and similar to the G&G offering and again the feedback from the boys was very good with no mis-feeds and highly consistent. At the time of writing, pricing on this product is still to be confirmed.

### ASG BLASTERS

I'm not sure if I have ever met a player who hasn't used this product in the weight of their choice. They are the staple of the British airsoft player and with some decent deals around they are consistent value for money. They were packaged in their usual bottle format. Feedback from the boys was a couple of feed issues but overall very consistent, as was expected.

So there you go. These are the findings of myself and the rest of Rhino who tested them on the day.

You make your own choice but in my opinion, on this day G&G was the superior product.

Test BBs were provided by Marek at Airsoft Zone, Chris at Airsoft Essentials and Chris from Patrol Base, so a big thanks to those guys.







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# NUPROL PMC

IT'S ALWAYS A PRETTY EXCITING time when you get a call from friends within the industry and they tell you "you have to come and see us, we've got something new and awesome to show you!" but that's exactly how it went when I received that very call from my good mate Ross Tucker, Operations and Marketing Manager at WE Airsoft Europe.

**"AS IS THEIR USUAL STYLE, THEY DIDN'T JUST PRESENT ME WITH A PLATE CARRIER AND A FEW POUCHES BUT AN ENTIRE RANGE WITH VIRTUALLY EVERY BIT OF KIT YOU COULD FEASIBLY USE IN IT! UTTERLY STAGGERING!"**

Very soon I was in the car heading round the M25 to go and meet with him; he and the team, the ones I refer to as "the hardest working guys in airsoft", have really been making some huge steps forward and mainly with their own in-house NUPROL brand. Just as with any new business they've had hard decisions to make in some areas but inevitably they've been made to ensure the honesty and longevity of their brand;

they've worked hard, been straight with both the trade and the community and put 100% into giving both UK and indeed international airsofters what they want and need.

Even with this as a background when Ross unveiled the plans for the new NUPROL Personal Military Clothing (PMC, yup, I saw what you did there!) range of tactical gear to me, to say I was completely stunned would be a huge understatement. Now Ross and the team at NUPROL have (in the main) come from airsoft-playing backgrounds and have a good few year's experience of using kit under their belts. There is, however, an enormous difference to having knowledge of how the kit works

and how you go about putting it together.

And it wasn't just this either; as is their usual style, they didn't just present me with a plate carrier and a few pouches but an entire range with virtually every bit of kit you could feasibly use in it! Utterly staggering!

Getting "hands on" to the pre-production samples gave an idea of the quality that we would be looking at for the commercial models that have already started landing in the stores. Ross explained to me that he and the team had spent many hours agonising over where to pitch their new products, in what often appears to be an already over-subscribed marketplace; their decision was, in my opinion, once again the correct one in that it was decided that the PMC range would be aimed solely at the airsoft market. Extraneous features such as quick release systems in the plate carriers were ditched, which of course keeps the price sensible!

It's not to say for a moment though that the PMC range doesn't consist of some quality products, as the team searched out a highly durable yet proprietary NP1000D fabric to form the basis of everything. They also scoured the market for equally high quality clasps, clips, zips and webbing to ensure that certainly for airsoft use everything would be fully fit for purpose.

Now the pre-production gear was certainly very well put together and looked great but you never really know what you're going to get from the factories until the first container arrives and the shipment is unloaded; I'm certain there were a few sleepless nights involved during the wait. Luckily for all concerned though, what arrived in terms of finished product was indeed of excellent quality and combined with some really clever and attractive NUPROL marketing tools and ideas, must be looking first rate in the stores!





## GOOD GEAR TO GO!

So with all of that as a scene-setter, what does the range actually consist of?

Well, first off I'll tell you that all the gear is currently available in Black, Tan, Green and "NP Camo" which I can see is going to work excellently with both Multicam and MTP.

The basis of the entire PMC gear system is the **PLATE CARRIER**. £59.99 gets you one of these cracking armour vests and there are features aplenty to justify this keen price tag. It looks to me that the NUPROL design team have spent a lot of time looking at a lot of different carriers and then amalgamated many great tweaks into their own.

There is quite literally MOLLE everywhere... Front, back and sides too so you're going to be able to load up this bad boy "assaulter heavy" style! The cummerbund is neatly elasticated for a personalised fit and comfort and one feature I really like is that the central cummerbund closure point is split into two, rather than just one big flap. I don't know if you've tried to adjust a plate carrier with just one closure panel but if it's loaded up with pouches it can be an absolute PITA!

There are triple velcro shoulder adjustments, again to aid in a perfect

fit and velcro panels front and rear for all your team and morale patches. The carrier is neatly rounded out with a broad webbing drag-handle to the upper rear.

To start pulling things together the first thing you're going to need is magazine pouches and there are several different models to choose from, although they all retail at just £12.99 and will accommodate up to four individual magazines per double pouch (all models of pouch require four lines of MOLLE for attachment). There's a very nicely put together double M4 **CLOSED TOP** model (this will also accommodate AK mags) which is spot on if you're a woodland player and want to ensure that all those costly magazines of yours are safely and securely retained. If you're more of a CQB hound then you have double **OPEN TOP** pouches for the M4, AK, and G36; the latter will hold both M14 and HK417 mags at a push!

If you're a pistol user then a measly £7.99 will get you an absolutely cracking **SINGLE PISTOL MAGAZINE** pouch; this little gem is completely adjustable and I

could secure everything from a tiny "Detonics" magazine to a whopping SOCOM

one with ease! Shotgun wielder? Again NUPROL have you covered with a really great **SHOTGUN SHELL PANEL** which takes up six lines of MOLLE but holds up to eighteen 3 x 10 shotgun shells; now THAT'S a whole lot of ordnance right there! To finish out matters relating to ammunition and magazines there's a classic roll-







up **DUMP POUCH** for £12.99 too.

With ammo sorted it's on to the all-important gear, admin, comms and first aid; for £9.99 you can pick up a mid-sized **RADIO POUCH** which will hold all medium radio models as it very neatly adjustable. I would also say this would make a good, small general use utility pouch or even a holder for grenades. There is one main large in the NUPROL range which takes up five lines of MOLLE; it's classed as a **MEDICS POUCH** but in reality it's a total "jack of all trades", simple and effective and costing once again just £12.99. Last but by no means least is a cracking little **ADMIN POUCH**, another classic design which is meant to sit centrally on the chest area of the carrier. At just, yup, you guessed it, £12.99 it has one large pocket

and one smaller pocket covered by a velcro over which again provides space for team or morale patches. There's also a small removable pouch included which is great for a smaller pistol mag or multitool.

### SQUARED AWAY

So, there you have it! A simple, well thought out range of tactical gear, solidly made from good quality fabric and components and all at a reasonable price!

Is it "tacticalbluetailorforce" standard? No, of course it isn't but for once a week skirmish use it's going to give great performance for a considerable period of time and leave you



**"THEY HAVE CREATED A RANGE OF GEAR THAT ULTIMATELY IS VERY, VERY AFFORDABLE AND AFTER A FEW MONTHS OF USE IN THE 'BLOOD AND MUD' I THINK YOU'LL BE HARD PUSHED TO TELL MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE FROM THE MORE EXPENSIVE BRANDS."**



money over to buy guns, bbs and pay your site fee.

I used the word "staggering" earlier and I certainly believe that the NUPROL

crew have once again shown they understand the business of airsoft all too well. They have created a range of gear that ultimately is very, very affordable and after a few months of use in the "blood and mud" I think you'll be hard pushed to tell much of a difference from the more expensive brands.

I'd say it's a big "WELL DONE" to everyone involved in pulling this range together and next month I'll get into telling you about the new NUPROL packs and slings and revisit the holster and helmet range!

For further information and stockist details please visit [www.wearsofteurope.com/eu/nuprol/np-pmc-gear](http://www.wearsofteurope.com/eu/nuprol/np-pmc-gear)







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# OPERATION NIMROD

## THE SAS RAID ON THE IRANIAN EMBASSY - PRINCE'S GATE LONDON 1980

RETURNING TO FAMOUS RAIDS THAT WOULD MAKE A GOOD AIRSOFT SCENARIO, BILLY RECOUNTS THE EVENTS OF POSSIBLY THE UK'S MOST FAMOUS

YOU COULD EASILY WALK right past the Iranian Embassy in London's Prince's Gate and have no idea of the drama that unfolded there on the 5th May 1980 (the embassy did not reopen until 1993), when the Special Air Service Regiment (you've probably heard of them) burst dramatically onto the scene. The cameras, press, police cordons, burn marks and empty shell casings have all been spirited away.

I was a ten year old school boy at the time and like everyone else in the UK/World had never heard of the SAS. We all knew who they were after that and now you can barely pick up a paper, peruse the aisles of Waterstones, or even visit a toy shop without seeing "Winged Dagger" badges advertising something.

It's a brand like no other and one that the likes of Margaret Thatcher and Michael Portillo used to send a clear message

to the baddies of the World, that you *"Don't mess with Great Britain"*. So where did it all begin?

Back in the 80's an oil rich region of Southern Iran, that was home to a large Arab population, were aggrieved that they were not benefitting from the area's riches (funny that, is this a familiar story?) and decided to do something about it. So they travelled to the UK and set about plotting their raid on the Iranian Embassy.

The Regiment were well versed in the 80's in practising for acts of terror on home soil. Not only were there increased incidents of hijacking planes in mid-air for ransom and political demands, the Provisional IRA were constantly testing them with new and novel ways to kill British Soldiers. For 10 years or so they had been practising clearing buildings, boats, tube trains and anything else you can think of and rescuing people.



The young would-be terrorists had hired a flat where they had hatched their plan, they left the flat in Earl's Court and made their way to Princes Gate and walked straight into the pages of history.

When the story first broke on the police airwaves, incident response was still in its infancy but it was overheard by an ex-member of the SAS working in London, who phoned Hereford and said *"Something's taking place which might be right up your street"*. Range Rovers were quickly racing down the motorway heading for the Capital.

These days we know that the Regiment are a formidable fighting unit and that they are called in when all other options have been exhausted. But in the 80's nobody knew who they were and when the Regiment arrived, the cops (who they were going to be taking over from when the Home Secretary's signature was on a piece of paper handing over control) had some serious misgivings. As you might expect, the SAS is made up of individuals - and they're not your run-of-the-mill soldiers.

Someone (in authority) once described them as *"A bunch of misfits that happen to fit together"* and as soon as the convoy of Range Rovers got to London, the lads got the lie of the land, unpacked their kit, did all the work they had to do... they started to piss about, play jokes on one another, nail, glue, staple kit to the floor and tables. Playing practical jokes on one another, having a laugh passes the time and lightens the atmosphere.

It might sound absurd and childish, after all there were lives at stake here and it was a very serious situation. But think about it for a second, if you are permanently on the verge of risking your life, or inflicting terrible violence on another person, it can take a terrible toll on you. Mucking about and playing jokes is a perfect way to lighten the mood. But the Bobbies who were witnessing all this were not so sure, there wasn't any recognisable rank structure, it was all first name terms, longer than normal hair, a little scruffy even. Who the hell were these guys anyway? But there wasn't a great deal they could do about it, who else were they going to call? Ghostbusters??

The terrorists inside (for that was what they were referred to) issued their demands, police cordons were set up, buildings were evacuated, streets closed and the siege began. Nearby the SAS were practising, practising and practising some more. People who knew the building inside and out, such as architects, cleaners, policemen etc. were dragged out of their beds and offices to fill in the gaps in the picture that they needed before the first SAS assaulter set foot in the building.

The first soldier to set foot in the Embassy actually did it the night before the raid itself, they were on the roof looking for likely strong points from which to secure the abseil ropes and they noticed a skylight that was not secure. They managed to prize it open and let themselves down inside the



building. But it was decided at that time not to go any further or spook the terrorists, after all the most important thing was neutralising them whilst protecting the hostages.

Back in the Regt's planning location a model was built of the Embassy which was central to the planning process, cameras/microphones were dropped down chimney pots so that they could listen to conversations and to establish who was where. On the rooftops and in the windows of adjacent flats sat surveillance experts who watched ceaselessly the routine comings and goings within the Embassy.

The situation within the Embassy was becoming tense. The skilled negotiators from the Police were playing for time, stringing the negotiations out, allowing the SAS to gather as much information as possible. Let's not forget that it was essential to Thatcher's Tory Government that these guys

were not successful in their attempt at holding the UK to ransom. There was only one way they were coming out of that building... in boxes or handcuffs!

Inside, the young terrorists were starting to lose their cool. They probably thought it would be over by now and they'd be heading home to a hero's welcome - not having to deal with hungry, tired, irritable hostages who were crying and needed feeding and taken to the loo. It probably wasn't turning out to be nearly as glamorous as they had imagined. Abbas Lavasani, the Embassy's Chief Press Officer, had made a point right from the start of the siege of antagonising the hostage-takers, belittling and haranguing them at every opportunity. On

the 6th day of the siege three shots rang out inside the building as tension came to a head.

A hush fell over the street. It was decision time. The Police now realised that the time had come, an hour later another three shots rang out and the body of Lavasani was



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**“AT APPROXIMATELY 19:00 HOURS A STUN GRENADE WAS LOWERED THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT ON THE TOP FLOOR AND DETONATED TO DRAW ATTENTION FROM THE ASSAULT THAT WAS TAKING PLACE ON THE LOWER FLOORS.”**



dumped on the street. Control was handed over to Colonel Mike Rose, Commanding Officer of the SAS, to mount an assault at a time of his choosing.

During an initial conversation with Willy Whitelaw, the British Home Secretary, the SAS Officers had been clear that there might well be as many as 40% casualties in a situation like this - but there was no way that Thatcher was going to let the young terrorists walk away or get away from this outrage.

At approximately 19:00 hours a stun grenade was lowered through the skylight on the top floor and detonated to draw attention from the assault that was taking place on the lower floors. It didn't work exactly to plan (what plan ever does?) as one of the abseilers got tangled in his rope above the balcony. This meant that the team on that balcony were unable to detonate the charges to blow in the windows. Sledge hammers did the trick though and soon the SAS were in.

A Policeman, Trevor Lock (who had been on duty in the Embassy at the time), was one of the hostages and remarkably he had managed to keep hidden a revolver in his belt throughout the entire siege. In an astonishing display of determination he had refused food throughout the entire 6 days so that he wouldn't have to go to the loo and reveal his pistol.

When the SAS burst in an exhausted Lock leapt onto one of the terrorists and prevented him from shooting at the soldiers as they entered the Embassy, no doubt saving at least one maybe two lives in the process. Some of the terrorists attempted to conceal themselves in the crowd and in one incident an SAS soldier on the stairs spotted a grenade in a hand. One of his colleagues further down the stairs span the man around and fired two bursts from his MP5 into his chest, killing him instantly.

The siege was lifted in 17 minutes with the death of only one hostage, one terrorist was lucky enough to escape with his life. Having served a "life sentence" in the UK he was released, given a new identity and still lives here. He was not deported in case in breached his human rights and, as you can imagine, PC Trevor Lock wrote to the Home Secretary to object...



A chance phone call...  
takes me back to Iraq and  
ungrateful people who are  
still doing their best to  
kill me!

# KEEPERS OF THE GATEWAY TO HELL

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# COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP

## TRAINING

**PRO-TACT TRAINING'S ANDY NIGHTINGALE OUTLINES  
THE BASIC SKILLS YOU NEED TO MASTER THE ART OF  
BEING A MARKSMAN**

IN TODAY'S SOCIETY IF YOU mention the word "combat", most people will think of hi-tech weapon systems that deliver state of the art missiles with devastating accuracy, or the more conventional war with tanks and artillery on a massive scale. Although very effective, they cannot replace the man on the ground, they can't search a building, nor can they rescue the suppressed... They can't even hold vital positions and make routine patrols! All these tasks must be completed with the common soldier.

It is the man on the ground that must fulfil the task of security and with that, comes the ability to fight, so a high level of individual marksmanship is required by everyone on the ground.

Many in the airsoft community are military or law enforcement trained but there is a greater number that have no formal training in shooting at all and the principles of marksmanship are what sets these trained individuals apart. Marksmanship principles are simple but to many they are not understood - even to some of those that shoot for a living.

Shooting a modern firearm or in our case, a RIF, is not hard. So long as the weapon is zeroed along with adequate recoil management and trigger control you should have no problem hitting your target. However, you will also need to know certain field firing positions, safe gun handling and how to shoot tactically whilst under duress.

To be able to perform all these tasks the shooter must undergo task-specific training programs and practice them as often as possible

and the easiest way to gain these skills is to sign up and complete some form of military service but, to most, that is either not desirable or not possible. There are training opportunities for civilians but these are few and far between,

however, military training puts the individual in a position that sees them as part of a machine, whereas private instruction trains the individual to become a lone fighter as well as a team player.

Perfect practice makes for perfect shooting and shooting under the watchful eye of a good instructor is paramount to maximise your potential and iron out any bad habits that you might have (we all have them). Tactical Shooting requires certain skills that are perishable and must be practiced as often as possible during live firing and "dry firing" is one of the biggest training tools that you will possess - and it's free!

Getting into positions, aiming, trigger control, acquisition and safe gun handling can all be done in repetition and without firing a single round. The only other thing you will need is the desire to learn and the right mind-set to be able to focus on your shooting whether it is in combat, or plinking cans in your back garden.

The ultimate goal when training is to be proficient at the skill you are training to perfect without conscious effort. This is true for most sports including shooting but for the combat shooter it could mean a matter of life or death (or in our case, a lonely walk back to the safe zone). Some will show more aptitude than others but none of us are born with the ability to shoot, so it is important to learn the techniques of combat marksmanship step by step as not to fall into "information overload" mode.

Combative shooting requires more than just standing still and shooting at a stationary target. Not only will the enemy target be moving (and possibly shooting back) but you also will be moving, either attacking or finding cover and or concealment.

Once your weapon has been zeroed you will be able to start a combative training program to suit your type of skirmish play. The first thing you should achieve is a tight group in the standing supported position, you will then be ready to continue with practicing slow fire shooting from field positions (kneeling, prone, sitting etc.). Then, when you are satisfied with your results, it will be time to advance to rapid fire and snap shooting drills but remember not to run before you can walk.







Introduce one skill at a time during your training sessions and master one before going on to another. If you cheat you are only cheating yourself.

## TARGETS AND STANDARDS

The sound of the battle field, the smoke and the adrenalin that is pumping through your body may put you in the zone of war but in reality, only hits count. Set yourself a realistic standard to reach. If you set your standards too high to begin with, you will only be disheartened when you cannot reach your goal and then give up on your training.

Don't make the target face too small to begin with and don't push the targets out to the limits of your weapon. Start big and close and then decrease the size of the target before increasing the distance. Remember airsoft is not as accurate as a firearm nor does it have the power to reach out. A metal target, such as the military "Figure 11" and "Figure 12" targets are an ideal training tool, as they give the shooter a good report when hit. Use this audible report as a source of positive feedback during your training. If you want to score your target then a strip of corrugated card can be placed over the target score zone, then if the target is hit in the score zone the BB will embed its self in the card and if you miss the target will ring out. It will also save time and money over card targets.

These military targets can be fixed to a wooden post and placed almost anywhere on your range (an alternative would be to use metal dinner plates). Although the targets are quite large for precision shooting you must remember that this is not the Olympics, this is combative shooting and your target will be man-size and possibly moving.

## DRY FIRING

As most skirmish days are held at weekends and sometimes fortnightly, dry firing is probably the best form of training and practice most of us will have. You don't need a range and you won't need ammunition so most of the time it's free. Dry firing on a regular basis will greatly improve your shooting

ability, however, just like any other training if not done properly, dry firing will engrain bad habits. Dry firing gives you the opportunity to practice shooting skills and train muscle memory, one of the key elements to effective combat shooting and it is also ideal for practicing trigger control without worrying about noise and recoil.

When dry firing there are certain rules to follow:

- 1) Always make sure that your weapon is unloaded. Remove all ammunition from the weapon the room and yourself.
- 2) Dry fire in a safe direction. Never use a mirror to check your progress you will tend to look at yourself and not the sights.
- 3) If you are interrupted or take a break always check the weapon is unloaded before continuing with your dry fire practice.
- 4) Remember the drill of dry fire is to manipulate the weapon without disturbing the sights.
- 5) Don't dry fire for any more than twenty minutes as you will start to lose concentration and become fatigued.

**"REMEMBER NOT TO RUN BEFORE YOU CAN WALK. INTRODUCE ONE SKILL AT A TIME DURING YOUR TRAINING SESSIONS AND MASTER ONE BEFORE GOING ON TO ANOTHER. IF YOU CHEAT YOU ARE ONLY CHEATING YOURSELF."**

## DRILLS

These drills will enable you to start a progressive training program with a standard airsoft rifle.

### SLOW FIRE PRACTICE DRILLS (with ammunition)

Shooting position = Standing - Range = 15 metres  
 Shooting position = Squatting - Range = 20 metres  
 Shooting position = Kneeling - Range = 20 metres  
 Shooting position = Sitting - Range = 25 metres  
 Shooting position = Prone - Range = 25 metres

### SNAP DRILLS

#### Head shots

Start with the weapon loaded and sling loose. Bring the weapon up and fire one round to the head zone. Safety on, rest and repeat. Continue this drill for 30 rounds. Make each round count. This is not about speed but accuracy. The more you practice this drill the smoother you will become and speed will follow. Set the target at a distance of 15 metres.

#### Body shots

Start with the weapon loaded and sling loose. Bring the weapon up and fire one round to the body zone. Safety on, rest and repeat. Continue this drill for 30 rounds. Make each round count. Again this is not about speed but accuracy. The more you practice this drill the smoother you will become and speed will follow.

Set the target at a distance of 25 metres.

Body shots fired from 10 metres or less can be done by firing "quick snaps". Quick snaps are shots that are pointed at the target rather than aimed. A point to note here is that the further the target is from the muzzle the more the accuracy diminishes. Quick snaps should not therefore be fired at ranges of more than 10 metres.

Practice the snap drills in all 5 field positions Standing, Kneeling, Squatting, Sitting and Prone.

Stay safe and happy shooting.

Pro-Tact run tactical training programs for the Airsoft community. If you would like to train with Pro-Tact or would like more information on their training programs contact them on Protactshooting@gmail.com or phone 07788 501184.





# CAPTAIN NOEL GODFREY CHAVASSE VC & BAR, MC (9 NOVEMBER 1884 – 4 AUGUST 1917)

**DAN MILLS WRITES ABOUT THE ONLY  
PERSON TO BE AWARDED THE VICTORIA  
CROSS TWICE DURING THE GREAT WAR**



...AWARDED FOR MOST CONSPICUOUS BRAVERY, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy.

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military decoration awarded for valour "in the face of the enemy" to members of the armed forces. It takes precedence over all other orders, decorations and medals. It may be awarded to a person of any rank in any service and also to civilians under military command. The VC is usually presented to the recipient, or to their next of kin, by the British Monarch at an investiture held at Buckingham Palace.

The VC was introduced on 29 January 1856 by Queen Victoria, to honour acts of valour during the Crimean War. Since then, the medal has been awarded 1,358 times to 1,355 individual recipients.

The last time it was awarded was in 2015, to Lance Corporal Joshua Leakey of 1 Para for his actions in Afghanistan. An interesting point to note is that Joshua Leakey's distant cousin, Nigel Leakey VC Kings African Rifles, was awarded the Victoria Cross for actions in the Second World War.

The decoration is a bronze cross patee, bearing the crown of Saint Edward surmounted by a lion, and the inscription "FOR VALOUR". The cross is suspended by a ring from a serifed "V" to a bar ornamented with laurel leaves, through which the crimson ribbon passes. The reverse of the suspension bar is engraved with the recipient's name, rank, number and unit. On the reverse of the medal is a circular panel on which the date of the act for which it was awarded is engraved in the centre.

"Bars" are awarded to the VC in recognition of the performance of further acts of gallantry meriting the award, although there are only three instances of someone receiving a second award. Here you will read about one of them.

Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse VC & Bar, MC (9 November 1884 – 4 August 1917) was a British medical doctor and British

Army officer who is one of only three people to be awarded the Victoria Cross twice and the only man to be awarded it twice for actions during the Great War 1914 - 1918.

The battlefield of Guillemont was to see acts of heroism by Captain Chavasse, in 1916. Chavasse was hit by shell splinters while rescuing men in no-man's land, it is said he got as close as 25 yards from the German line, where he found three men and continued throughout the night under a constant rain of sniper bullets and bombing.

He performed similar heroics in the offensive at Passchendaele to gain a second VC and become the most highly decorated British serviceman in the war. Although operated upon, he was to die of his wounds two days later in 1917.

Noel Godfrey Chavasse was the younger of identical twin boys (Christopher), he was educated at Magdalen College School, Liverpool College and then Trinity College Oxford.

## UNIVERSITY AND EARLY PROFESSIONAL CAREER

In 1907, Noel graduated with First-class honours and stayed on to study medicine, in 1908 both twins represented Great Britain in the Olympic Games at 400m. Noel finished second in his heat while Christopher finished third, neither time being fast enough to progress further.

It was here that Noel joined the Oxford OTC medical unit and had a small taste of military life. By the following May, he was promoted to Lance Sergeant and shortly after left Trinity, leaving for Liverpool where he continued with further studies. In the autumn he went to London to sit his examination for Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, where he failed on his first attempt due to illness, passing with ease on his second. Academic study continued apace and he was in need of a hospital placement, this he duly took up in Dublin.

In January 1912 Chavasse passed his final medical examination and was awarded the University's premier medical prize, the Derby Exhibition, in March that year. On 22 July 1912, Noel registered as a doctor with the General Medical Council. His first placement was at the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool.

## MILITARY CAREER AND DECORATIONS

In early 1913, after discussions with some of his fellow doctors, Chavasse applied for and was accepted by the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC); he was commissioned as a Lieutenant





## BAR TO VICTORIA CROSS

Chavasse's second award was made during the period 31 July to 2 August 1917, at Wieltje, Belgium; the full citation was published on 14 September 1917 and read:

*"War Office, September, 1917.*

*His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of a Bar to the Victoria Cross to Capt. Noel Godfrey Chavasse, V.C., M.C., late K.A.M.C., attd. L'pool R.*

*For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when in action.*

*Though severely wounded early in the action whilst carrying a wounded soldier to the Dressing Station, Capt. Chavasse refused to leave his post, and for two days not only continued to perform his duties, but in addition went out repeatedly under heavy fire to search for and attend to the wounded who were lying out.*

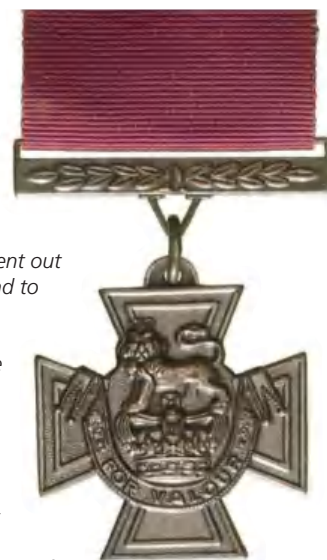
*During these searches, although practically without food during this period, worn with fatigue and faint with his wound, he assisted to carry in a number of badly wounded men, over heavy and difficult ground.*

*By his extraordinary energy and inspiring example, he was instrumental in rescuing many wounded who would have otherwise undoubtedly succumbed under the bad weather conditions.*

*This devoted and gallant officer subsequently died of his wounds."*

Chavasse died of his wounds in Brandhoek at the CSS and is buried at Brandhoek New Military Cemetery, Vlamertinge, where his military headstone carries, uniquely, a representation of two Victoria Crosses.

A very, very brave man.



on 2 June and posted to the 10th Battalion the King's (Liverpool Regiment), the Liverpool Scottish as Surgeon-Lieutenant. The 10th Kings had been a Territorial battalion since the Haldane Reforms of 1909. Chavasse joined the battalion on 2 June 1913 and as an officer in a Territorial unit, Chavasse now had to attend to both his civilian and military duties.

During the First World War Chavasse was a Captain with the RAMC attached to the 1/10th Battalion of the King's (Liverpool Regiment). He was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at Hooge, Belgium in June 1915, although the award was not gazetted until 14 January 1916. He was promoted to Captain on 1 April 1915 and on 30 November 1915 that year he was Mentioned in Despatches for gallantry.

## VICTORIA CROSS

Chavasse was first awarded the VC for his actions on 9 August 1916, at Guillemont, France when he attended to the wounded all day under heavy fire. The full citation was published on 24 October 1916 and read:

*"Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, M.C., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps.*

*For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty.*

*During an attack he tended the wounded in the open all day, under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy. During the ensuing night he searched for wounded on the ground in front of the enemy's lines for four hours.*

*Next day he took one stretcher-bearer to the advanced trenches, and under heavy shell fire carried an urgent case for 500 yards into safety, being wounded in the side by a shell splinter during the journey. The same night he took up a party of twenty volunteers, rescued three wounded men from a shell hole twenty-five yards from the enemy's trench, buried the bodies of two Officers, and collected many identity discs, although fired on by bombs and machine guns.*

*Altogether he saved the lives of some twenty badly wounded men, besides the ordinary cases which passed through his hands. His courage and self-sacrifice, were beyond praise."*





# BELFAST '69 BOMBS, BURNINGS AND BIGOTRY

HAVING SERVED IN NORTHERN IRELAND HIMSELF, MATT LIMB OBE FINDS THIS BOOK A FASCINATING INSIGHT INTO HOW “THE TROUBLES” STARTED – AND WENT ON TO LAST NEARLY FOUR DECADES

OPERATION BANNER WAS THE NAME given to the British Armed Forces operation in Northern Ireland which lasted thirty-eight years, from August 1969 to July 2007. One of, if not the longest, military operation in recent history, which at its peak had over 20,000 troops deployed. For almost four decades service personnel spent their careers with Op Banner as the framework; today's Generals broke their teeth on Op Banner as young officers and this all happened in our backyard!

Much has been written about the days of Op Banner and the involvement of the British Armed Forces, for many a senior officer it was the mainstay of their autobiographies; but very little has been written about the very moment they deployed, in August 1969.

Author, Andrew Walsh, is no stranger to the *Troubles*, coming from a generation that grew up with bombings and shooting as a near daily occurrence, which underpins his lifelong interest in the conflicts and history of Ireland. The intricacies and complications of Irish history leading to the summer of 1969 could not be more complicated if we tried; at every corner of history there is a twist and turn making the deployment of the British Armed Forces harder to truly understand. But *Belfast '69 – Bombs, Burnings and Bigotry* does just this; easing the reader through the turbulence of previous decades and centuries to the hard facts and cold light of day in August 1969.

*‘Probably from the autumn of 1968 we were shocked at what was happening with the civil rights situation, the first march which was in Londonderry. My gut reaction at the time was that they get what they deserve. We weren’t able to take in the enormity of what was happening, we weren’t prepared for it at all’*

If, when opening the book, you want to get straight into the summer of 1969 you will be disappointed but by reading and waiting; enlightened. Starting with a *Chronology of Events in Irish History* reaching back over 400 years Andrew Walsh educates the reader to the wider background centuries before 1969, which shaped events, people and attitudes on that summer’s afternoon. Following this he adds a brief explanation of terms, phrases and organisations; again invaluable reading to fully understand the background to the *Troubles* and the many factions involved. Taking time to read both parts gives the background to the events of that week in August 1969.

*‘The attack was brutal and relentless; the unresisting marchers were beaten, knocked down and kicked, prevented from seeking shelter, pursued and further assaulted. There was at least one near fatality when a girl was knocked unconscious and left face down in a stream. Several people were taken to hospital ....’*

**WITH A NEAR TOTAL BREAKDOWN IN CIVIL LAW AND ORDER, PRIME MINISTER HAROLD WILSON HAD LITTLE OPTION BUT TO SEND IN BRITISH TROOPS ON A ‘LIMITED OPERATION’. THEY ARRIVED AT 17:30 ON 15 AUGUST 1969; THEY LEFT THIRTY EIGHT YEARS LATER!**



In terms of a time-line *Belfast '69 – Bombs, Burnings and Bigotry* main chapters cover little more than seventy-two hours, as civil order totally broke down in Belfast. But the writing style makes for informative, addictive and, at times, uncomfortable reading, as it follows incident after incident, in the finest of detail with a wealth of eye-witness accounts and referenced background notes over what must be the most turbulent few hours in our history; including the shooting of Gerald McAuley;

*'... one priest took the women and children in, from what I am told he went up the stairs to make arrangements when he heard the shot and when he looked out Gerald had fell to the ground. He tried to get up when the machine gun was put on him'*

With a near total breakdown in civil law and order, Prime Minister Harold Wilson had little option but to send in British troops on a 'limited operation'. They arrived at 17:30 on 15 August 1969; they left thirty eight years later!

As one soldier commented on arrival in 1969:

*'One abiding and awful memory I have is of seeing literally hundreds of Catholics – women and children in the main – streaming towards us and past us to the safety of the Catholic Church, 50 or 60 yards behind the police station. I simply could not believe how many houses were on fire; there was smoke and flame everywhere ... I even seen a man with a baby's cot on his back, coming out of all the smoke, his face blackened from all the soot ...'*

The book also looks at some of the political, religious and economic background of life in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s which highlights the many discriminations; then finally and to give a balance, the full transcripts of interviews used through the book are included.

As a young soldier I arrived in Northern Ireland less than a decade later, I had the inevitable background briefs on the political and current situation; but clearly remember such briefs as hard work and lacking the required clarity and understanding for the job in hand. Since then, in my mind and understanding, the waters have cleared but that very point that the British Armed Forces deployed into Northern Ireland could not have been made any clearer than in this book. In *Belfast '69 – Bombs, Burnings and Bigotry* little is hidden, it is delivered warts and all.

If you have an interest in Northern Ireland, or in deed the history of the British Isles or the British Armed Forces, then I would highly recommend this book. *Belfast '69 – Bombs, Burnings and Bigotry* may only cover a very short episode in our history but it is a critical episode that found the British Army deployed on our own streets for an enduring operation lasting almost four decades; which in turn changed the face of the nation forever.



*Belfast '69 – Bombs, Burnings and Bigotry* is published by Fonthill Media and retails at around £18.99.

For more information, visit <http://fonthillmedia.com/Belfast-69>



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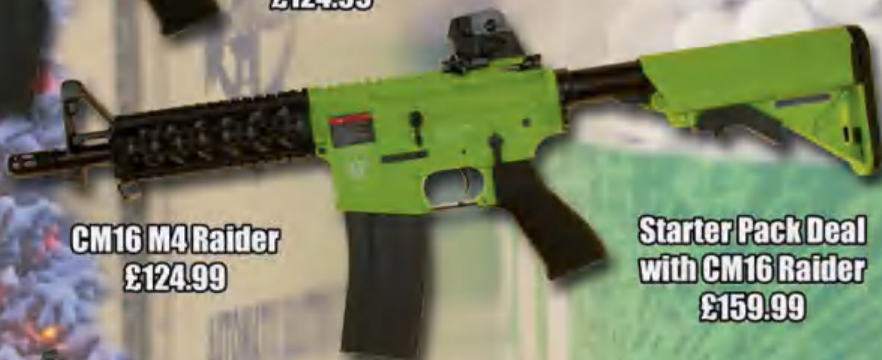


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